DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 131 EC 302 725

AUTHOR Johnson, Robert C., Ed.
TITLE Access: Language in Deaf Education. Proceedings of a Seminar Concerning "Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education" (Washington, D.C., February 21, 1989). Occasional Paper 90-1.
INSTITUTION Gallaudet Research Inst., Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Apr 90
NOTE 50p.; For the paper, "Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education," see ED 316 978.
AVAILABLE FROM Scientific Communications Program, Gallaudet Research Institute, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Access to Education; *American Sign Language; *Classroom Communication; *Deafness; *Educational Principles; Elementary Secondary Education; Mainstreaming; Opinions; Sign Language; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This seminar proceedings document offers a summary of the views articulated in a paper by Robert E. Johnson and others titled "Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education." The paper's contention was that deaf students' low average academic achievement levels are not results of learning deficits inherently associated with deafness but of problems in the communication practices of the students' teachers. The paper listed 12 principles to guide deaf education, all of which center around the view that instruction of deaf children should be conducted in a natural sign language (basically American Sign Language). Five panel members then respond to the paper, including David M. Denton, Gerilee Gustason, Carol Padden, David S. Martin, and Roberta Thomas. Responses address such issues as the use of Total Communication, Signing Exact English, mainstreaming, teachers' signing skills, and low expectations for students with deafness. Questions from the audience are then presented, with answers from the panel. (JDD)

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ED 366 131

Access: Language in Deaf Education

Proceedings of a Seminar
Sponsored by the Gallaudet Research Institute
Concerning *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*

• Held February 21, 1989, at Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C. •

Edited by

Robert C. Johnson
Gallaudet Research Institute

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Gallaudet Research Institute Occasional Paper 90-1
Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.

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*Carol J. Erting did not present during the overview, but participated in the question/answer session.

Preface

On the afternoon of February 21, 1989, the Gallaudet Research Institute (GRI) sponsored a seminar called "Access: Language in Deaf Education." In that seminar, three Gallaudet researchers summarized the views they had recently articulated in GRI Working Paper 89-3, *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*. That paper's contention was that deaf students' low average academic achievement levels are not results of learning deficits inherently associated with deafness but of problems in the communication practices of the students' teachers. The paper listed twelve principles the authors believe should guide deaf education, all of which center around the view that instruction of deaf children should be conducted in a "natural sign language," which in the United States is American Sign Language (ASL).

At the seminar, the authors' presentations were immediately followed by responses from five other panelists whose personal and professional backgrounds brought a variety of perspectives to the afternoon's discussion. Advance interest in the seminar was so great that the GRI decided to broadcast the event live on the campus cable network; it was clear that the small auditorium selected as the site for the seminar would quickly fill to overflowing. The thoughts spoken or signed that afternoon, which we are attempting to share with our readers now, represent only a glimpse into the historic discussion of communication issues that has swept the field since that day.

The idea that ASL should be the preferred mode of communication in the education of American deaf children has surfaced repeatedly during the past few years, but for some reason--perhaps the "tenor of the times" or the provocative nature of this particular document--the GRI's publication of *Unlocking the Curriculum* has acted as a catalyst for generating a nationwide debate on the issue. Regardless of the ultimate resolution of this debate, we look upon the reconsideration of deeply-entrenched ideas as a healthy development within the entire deafness community. To generate such a reconsideration, in fact, was a primary motive for the GRI's publication of that working paper. GRI working/occasional papers are intended to make more accessible to a wide audience timely and thought-provoking research-based materials.

Since the release of that paper and the occurrence of the seminar, the response to *Unlocking the Curriculum* has been overwhelming. The GRI has received requests for thousands of copies of the paper, and many lengthy letters and essays have been written in reaction to the paper by educators, parents of deaf children, and researchers. Various versions of the feature article published in the GRI periodical *Research at Gallaudet* on *Unlocking the Curriculum* have now appeared in a number of publications, including *On the Green*, *Endeavor*, *Perspectives for Teachers of the Hearing Impaired*, and *Gallaudet Today*.

Interest in *Unlocking the Curriculum* has not been limited to the United States. The paper has already been translated into Spanish, French, and German and is currently being translated into American Sign Language, Thai, and Japanese. The paper was discussed at the recent international Deaf Way Conference and Festival in Washington, D.C., which was attended by deaf and hearing people from 80 countries. Interestingly, individuals from such countries as Sweden, Denmark, and Venezuela gave presentations at The Deaf Way describing existing educational programs in which natural sign languages are used as deaf children's first language in their respective countries.

About this Document

This document contains actual transcripts of the videotapes of the seminar, "Access: Language in Deaf Education." Most of the presenters submitted written versions of their comments to the GRI after the seminar, but some of the written papers differed substantially from what the presenters had actually said. Although such changes do not normally present a problem for publishers of proceedings, staff in the GRI's Scientific Communications Program concluded that, in this case, the continuity of the event itself would be lost by publishing the "written-later" versions. Printing the revised statements, for instance, would have rendered meaningless some of the remarks intended as rebuttles to other presenters' comments. To preserve the integrity of this event, therefore, it seemed critical that this document reflect as accurately as possible this particular moment in the history of the ongoing controversy surrounding language in deaf education. To accomplish this goal, audiotapes of both spoken presentations and spoken interpretations of signed presentations were carefully transcribed. Videotapes were viewed to correct interpreting errors and to make note of significant audience responses (such as applause) that were visible but not audible.

To further clarify what follows, during all the presentations, with only a few momentary exceptions, there were two interpreters on stage or at a microphone at all times, interpreting what was spoken or signed. Spoken English presentations (e.g., those by Karchmer, Liddell, Johnson, Denton, Martin, Thomas, and [during the question-answer session] Erting) were interpreted into both ASL and signed English. Presentations in ASL (e.g., Padden's) were interpreted into both signed and spoken English. Presentations in signed English (e.g., Gustason's) were interpreted into both ASL and spoken English. Questions and comments from the audience were similarly interpreted.

Copies of *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*, the original working paper to which the participants of this seminar were responding, may be obtained for $2.00 per copy (with discounts for large quantities) by writing to the address below. Copies of the papers each presenter submitted after the seminar may also be obtained free of charge by writing to the same address.

Scientific Communications Program
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Panelists

David M. Denton has been Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Deaf since 1967. He has degrees from Cumberland College, Lenoir-Rhyne College, California State University, Northridge, and Western Maryland College. He is regarded as one of the first to implement the educational philosophy known as Total Communication. He has lectured widely and published many articles and chapters related to deafness and communication practices in deaf education.

Carol J. Erting is Director of the Culture and Communication Studies Program in the Gallaudet Research Institute and serves on the faculty of Gallaudet's Department of Linguistics and Interpreting. She received her B.S. and M.A. degrees in communicative disorders from Northwestern University and her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from The American University. Her research includes studies of classroom interaction, analysis of discourse between teachers and parents and deaf children, studies of interaction between deaf mothers and deaf infants, and cross-cultural research on deaf education.

Gerilee Gustason, a co-author of *Signing Exact English*, has served for many years as Executive Director of Gallaudet's SEE Center for the Advancement of Deaf Children and has taught in Gallaudet's School of Education and Human Services. Gustason received a B.A. in English from the University of California at Riverside, M.A. degrees from Gallaudet, the University of Maryland, and California State University, Northridge, and a Ph.D. in education from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. She is currently on the faculty at the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at San Jose State University in California. Gustason was deafened by spinal meningitis at the age of five.

Robert E. Johnson is an anthropologist and linguist interested in the study of sign languages and their place in deaf communities. He holds a B.A. degree in psychology from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in anthropology from Washington State University. He currently chairs the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting at Gallaudet. His most recent research interests include the development of linguistic notation systems for describing sign languages and the acquisition of ASL by deaf preschool children. He has also been working with educators from several countries where natural sign language-based curricula are being implemented.

Scott K. Liddell is a linguist in the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting at Gallaudet University. He has a B.S. degree in mathematics from Weber State College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of California at San Diego. His work in ASL syntax, segmental description of ASL signs, and morphological processes in ASL has led to a longstanding interest in linguistic issues in deaf education.

David S. Martin is currently Dean and Coordinator of Undergraduate Teacher Training Programs in the School of Education and Human Services at Gallaudet. He received a B.A. in French from Yale University, an Ed.M. and a C.A.S. from Harvard School of Education, and a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from Boston College. His major areas of involvement have been in development of cognitive skills in hearing impaired learners, teacher education, social studies, and professional preparation.

Carol Padden is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. She received a B.S. in linguistics from Georgetown University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in theoretical linguistics from the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests range from ASL syntax and deaf culture to computer programs designed to improve deaf students' literacy skills. She has just co-authored, with her husband Tom Humphries, a book about deaf people called *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. Padden is deaf and grew up in a deaf family.

Roberta Thomas, a long-standing activist in organizations of parents of deaf children, founded and directed the Action Alliance of Parents of Deaf Children in Philadelphia. She has also developed and directed a home intervention program called Project Hope, through which parents of deaf children and deaf adults offer help to other parents of deaf children. She is presently the Executive Director of the American Society of Deaf Children and a mother of three. Her youngest child, Jesse, is deaf.

Welcome and Introductions

Michael A. Karchmer
Dean, Graduate Studies and Research
Gallaudet University

Good afternoon, members of the Gallaudet community and guests. On behalf of the Gallaudet Research Institute I want to welcome you to this seminar entitled "Access: Language in Deaf Education."

My name is Michael Karchmer and it is my pleasure to introduce the presenters for this afternoon. Today we deal with an important and timely subject. That it is important can be seen by the size of the audience both here and on other parts of the campus, and by the high level of interest preceding this event.

The starting point for our discussion today is the paper, *Unlocking the Curriculum*, by Robert E. Johnson, Scott Liddell, and Carol Erting. Many of you have already had the chance to read the paper, which has received wide circulation around campus. In a few moments Dr. Liddell and Dr. Johnson will give a brief overview. Following this, each of the five panel members will respond from a different perspective. Our panel is a distinguished group. Each of the members is well known for his or her views on the education of deaf children. Each of the panelists will have fifteen minutes to respond. Then the authors and other panelists will comment briefly. At the end of the panel discussion there will be a time for questions and comments from the audience. The question and answer period will be led by Dr. Bruce White. There are two ways of asking questions: You can either stand and ask the question or write it on a 3 x 5 card which you have in your program.

At the outset I want to emphasize that the session today represents only a beginning. It should be seen as the opening of a dialogue. Today we cannot hope to address, much less solve, the challenges facing deaf education. The success of today's seminar can only be measured by how well it succeeds in getting important issues on the table for consideration within the academic community. We will not attempt to reach consensus today. That would not be possible. But that is no problem. Diversity of thought and the competition of ideas are the cornerstones of the academic process.

Before proceeding I would like to acknowledge the efforts of a great many people who have helped set up this seminar. Special thanks go to the personnel in the Department of TV, Film, and Photography, the Office of Public Relations, the Gallaudet Interpreting Service, the GRI's Scientific Communications Program, and the Dean's office at Graduate Studies and Research. Thanks also to the interpreters. Most of all, thanks to all of you for your interest and for being part of the dialogue.

Now it is my privilege to introduce the presenters today. A paragraph about each can be found in your program. Dr. Scott Liddell is a professor in the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting at Gallaudet. This spring term he is pursuing a variety of research and writing projects while he is on sabbatical from the university. Dr. Robert E. Johnson is chairman of the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting and a well-published scholar and researcher. Dr. Carol Erting is director of the GRI's Culture and Communication Studies Program. She is also co-program chair of this summer's Deaf Way Conference. Dr. David Denton is Superintendent of the Maryland

School for the Deaf. He has spent a great deal of his energy over the past few years leading discussions of the implications of the concept "least restrictive environment." Dr. Gerilee Gustason is a professor in Gallaudet's Department of Education and one of the originators of Signing Exact English. Dr. Carol Padden is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of California at San Diego and co-author of the recent book, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*[1]. Dr. David Martin is Dean of the School of Education and Human Services and he brings a great deal of experience in teacher preparation and in research to our discussions today. Roberta Thomas is presently Executive Director of the American Society for Deaf Children and she has been Education/Early Intervention Specialist for the Massachusetts Commonwealth Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She herself is a parent of a deaf teenager whose name I misspelled in the program. It should be a son named Jesse, J-E-S-S-E.

So, without further comments I would like to turn the program over to Dr. Liddell. And I would like to apologize to the folks in the first three rows. There is apparently no loop system[2] in operation today, as you have probably guessed by now. Dr. Liddell.

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[1]Padden, C. & Humphries, T. (1988). *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[2]An amplification system for hard of hearing individuals.

Authors' Overview of GRI Working Paper 89-3: *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*

Scott K. Liddell

Professor, Department of Linguistics and Interpreting
Gallaudet University

I'm going to begin with a brief description of some recent events which have led us to produce this paper. First, we've all regarded deaf education as a closed system. Parents of deaf children, deaf people themselves, and professionals in linguistics and psychology have written about the inadequacies of deaf education, but have been relatively powerless in terms of having any real influence. Then, almost exactly a year ago, deaf people rose up and took control of the premier deaf institution in the world. This event by itself raised expectations that the system might be subject to change. We've seen natural sign languages become the language of the classroom in several foreign countries. Some examples are Sweden, Denmark, Venezuela, and there are others. Also during the past year a fortunate chain of circumstances brought the three of us [i.e., Liddell, Johnson, and Erting] in contact with officials of a state board of education. These were people in a position to establish a model program and who seemed receptive to ideas about American Sign Language. We proposed to them establishing a model program which would begin with children who will be born in the next year or so. We committed ourselves to ten years of work to bring that program into existence. We discussed these issues with officials of the state board and found them to be receptive. But they wanted a written proposal from us. And writing that proposal led more or less directly to the paper which has spawned this seminar. I should mention that we have not yet heard a final answer from the state board. It is still under review.

I will now describe very briefly our view of the failure of the system which educates deaf children. After that Bob Johnson will describe a set of principles which we believe should be part of any system which has as its purpose the education of deaf children. The education of deaf children in the United States is not as it should be. Recent studies have found that patterns of low achievement have persisted more than a decade after the beginning of Total Communication programs. Not only that, in each year of school deaf students fall further and further behind in reading and mathematics achievement. We've seen the results of an entire generation of deaf students going through the system. Current methods have had an opportunity to work if they were going to work. We propose that there are primarily two reasons for the failure of the system. The first, lack of linguistic access to curricular content. And the second, a cycle of low expectations.

Total Communication did not start out this way but it has come to mean Simultaneous Communication. Because it calls for teachers to sign, it has come to stand as a symbol of opposition to oralism and as such has enjoyed substantial support from the adult deaf population. But what is Simultaneous Communication? It's signing and talking at the same time. But this is misleading, because the two messages are not equal. When hearing people talk and sign at the same time, the spoken message is primary. The spoken words are not present to clarify the signs. It's the reverse. The signs are primarily used as an aid in understanding the spoken language message. We refer to this as "Sign Supported Speech." It's easy to see that the spoken signal maintains the grammatical structure of English. The signed portion of the message, however, is seriously flawed. Here is a typical example of Simultaneous Communication from Johnson and Erting, in press. [See the transcript on the next page, which was shown as an overhead transparency at the seminar.] It comes from a teacher interacting with four-year-old deaf children. The signs which accompany the speech are often misarticulated, sometimes to such a degree that a different, unintended sign is produced. So if you look at the overhead briefly: The teacher says "can" but

TELL SAY HORSE RABBIT NO
Tell . . . tell the Easter Bunny . . . He said, "No, he's

ALL OUTSIDE DIFFERENT COLOR Pro3
all out." You can take a different color.

FORGET TELL THANK-YOU
. . . You forgot to say you've . . . say thank you . . .

T YOU FORGET HER VOICE PLEASE
T says you forgot her. Use your voice please . . .

ZERO ORANGE SORRY OUTSIDE ORANGE PICK OTHER COLOR
No orange. He's sorry but he's out of orange. Pick another color.

ZERO PURPLE WHAT WRONG TOGETHER-WITH EASTER DEVIL
No purple? What's wrong with this Easter Bunny? . . .

Pro3 CAN'T HEAR YOU Pro3 CAN'T HEAR YOU
Well, tell him. He can hear you. He can hear you . . .

I THINK I FREEZE GREEN TOGETHER-WITH YELLOW FLOWER LOC-ON-I-T
Ah, I think I want a green one with yellow flowers on it.

[------unintelligible-------] YELLOW FLOWER [---] OTHER 1
Those are purple flowers. I said yellow flowers. Get another one.

EAT WAIT OTHER 1 CAN OTHER 1
Okay. Wait a minute. Can I have another one? Have another one?

I FREEZE OTHER 1 CAN I HAVE 2 PINK 1 GOOD
I want another one. Can I have two? Oh. A pink one.

I GET 2 MAYBE ASK GOOD
I got two. . . . I don't know, maybe. Good. Okay, let's change.

GOOD EASTER DEVIL
You were a good Easter Bunny.

signs "can't." The teacher says "want" but signs "freeze." The teacher says "bunny" but signs "horse" or "devil." Productions of this quality are not unusual among hearing teachers using SSS.

How is this possible? One explanation is that because the hearing teacher is attending primarily to the spoken portion of the signal, the fact that the signed portion has broken down is seldom recognized. Teachers generally believe that because they are signing, the children have access to the information being put out by their speech. So they continue the SSS. But SSS is supposed to be a model of English which is visible to deaf students. Examine the signs on the overhead and you will see a very poor model of English. The signs are in all upper-case letters and the accompanying speech is in italics. If you will take a look at the overhead and focus on just what sort of a signed message is being produced, what you see are bits of sentences with no obvious grammatical organization. But it is presumed that the children watching this teacher understood the teacher and it is presumed that by watching that teacher they were improving their English. But wait a minute! Why do deaf children need a model of English? They need it because they need to learn English. The fact that they need to learn English suggests that they will have trouble understanding English when they see it. But they are expected to learn *every*thing--history, math, and so on--through English. It's not surprising, then, that deaf children do not achieve well in this environment.

Proponents of signed English systems assume that signed English is a visible model of English and that this leads to a natural acquisition of English grammar, which leads to better English. There are papers which provide evidence against this view. I'll only mention the most recent. Supalla[3] studied the grammars of children's English signing in an ideal signed English environment. It was ideal because it was not contaminated by ASL, as far as could be determined, and because teachers made as complete a representation of English as they could, being careful to add endings to verbs, plurals to nouns, and so on. He found the signing of the students was characterized by significant idiosyncratic divergences from the grammars predicted by the educational model. In other words, the assumption that SEE2 leads to the natural acquisition of English grammar was not supported.

Current approaches to deaf education continue to pursue English-only and speech-dominant approaches. These approaches expect the children to learn curricular material through communication in a form which they can understand only imperfectly at best. We maintain that the requirement that teachers must speak as they teach and the emphasis on speech training for deaf students is, in fact, the practice of oralism, no matter what name it is given. We refer to it as "crypto-oralism" since the essence of TC is to require students to comprehend and learn subject matter through spoken English even though it is supported by signs.

In contrast, all deaf children seem capable of developing sophisticated grammars of ASL, either from deaf parents or from contact with deaf children of deaf parents. Now, we propose that changing the language policy and permitting the use of ASL in the classroom would be of benefit in attempting to bring deaf children closer to normative grade level achievement. This alone, however, would probably not bring children up to parity with their hearing peers. Deaf education in the U.S. has come to expect that deaf children cannot perform as well as hearing children and has structured itself in ways that guarantee that result. Aspiring teachers are taught that deaf children are deficient. Courses which focus on positive aspects of the language and culture of deaf people are noticeably absent from the curriculum. Virtually all programs teach only some system

[3]Supalla, S. (1986). Manually Coded English: The Modality Question in Signed Language Development. Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

of SSS and usually require only two or three courses. The result is that aspiring teachers learn that deaf students are deficient and can't be expected to perform as well as hearing students. This takes the burden off the teachers, who are no longer expected to produce results equivalent to results for hearing students. Further, because of the lack of real sign language courses they are not prepared to even talk with their deaf students. The result is that although aspiring teachers meet the qualifications of their teacher training programs, they are nevertheless singularly unqualified to teach deaf children.

[applause]

Robert E. Johnson

Professor, Department of Linguistics and Interpreting
Gallaudet University

I will be talking about the principles that we have developed that we think should guide the design of deaf education. And let me say at the outset that we know that many of the things that we are saying are not terribly new. People have been talking about this for years. Some of the ways that we have put them together are unusual, but most of the ideas have been around for a long time. I think that it is pretty much just a happy coincidence of time that all at once it is possible to talk about these issues in a public forum and get a kind of responsiveness from the system that we couldn't have seen a few years ago. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we can take it as a given now that deaf people will be involved in and in charge of institutions that have to do with their outcomes and their growth.

The reason that we outlined the principles in such detail is that we think it's important to have your system be driven by principles rather than by practical limitations. And one of the responses that we've been getting since we started to circulate this paper is many people will say to us, "Well, those are good ideas but they're just not practical." And the implication, therefore, is that we should lower our expectations. We feel that the way to design a curriculum is to decide which principles will govern it, try to design practices that should make it happen, and if in fact it is impractical you may not meet your goals but you can continue to work toward the goals. Okay. I'm just going to read through the 12 principles that we listed in the paper. I'll shoot each one up on the overhead, give you a second to look at it, and then I'll talk about it.

Number one: "Deaf children will learn if they have access to the things we want them to learn." Children are born with the capacity to learn, and children have a tremendous desire to learn. If we put them in a position where they can, they will. Current practice in deaf education denies access to learning because it asks children to try and learn through a language that they don't have. For this reason our first principle says that all communication conducted between children and adults in educational contexts should be conducted in a language to which the children have access. That makes fairly simple sense. And, conversely, adults who are present in the situation should be able to talk to the kids.

Principle Number Two: "We think the first language of deaf children in the United States should be American Sign Language." [applause] When children are born, they are predisposed to learn a natural language. We know this from research. We know this from the fact that children learn natural languages. And even deaf children learn natural languages when they are put in contact with one, namely, if they are put in contact with adults to sign ASL in the United States. Not only that, but the fact that ASL is easily learned suggests that it is a good vehicle for talking about the world. And that's really the crux of our proposal. Incidentally, there is really no research, no evidence to suggest that learning ASL hurts English development. In fact, to the contrary, there are suggestions that bilingualism and suggestions that early sign language exposure will actually improve achievement for deaf children.

Three: "The acquisition of a natural sign language should begin as early as possible in order to take advantage of critical period effects." This means that as soon as a kid is identified as deaf, he or she has to come in contact with people who learn . . . who use the language that he will learn. It's a simple principle and straightforward. In addition to that, the family--if the family happens

to be a hearing family--should be given access to the language as well so that they can communicate with their child. And participate in its growth.

Principle Four: "The best models for natural language acquisition, the development of a social identity, and the enhancement of self esteem for deaf children are deaf adults who use the language proficiently." There's more to using the language than syntax and grammar and words. There are ways of using it. There's a way of interacting while you are using it, and there's a way of being deaf that is best exemplified by deaf adults. Thus, the initial models for language acquisition for deaf children with hearing parents should be deaf adults. This principle, incidentally, turns current practice on its head. Current practice in most institutions, most deaf schools, suggests that you should keep deaf teachers away from the kids until the upper grades when they can't do the damage of hindering the access of English. This suggests just the opposite: you should get deaf adults with the kids in the *lowest* grades and then, by the time that they come in contact with hearing people who are less skilled at signing, they will be able to understand them more easily.

Five: "The natural sign language acquired by a deaf child provides the best access to educational content." This is clear. This principle says that it is more important to be able to do math than to speak about it.

Six: "Sign language and spoken language are not the same and must be kept separate in use and in the curriculum." We go into this at length in the paper so I won't go into it much more now.

Seven: "The learning of English for a deaf person is the process of learning a second language through literacy." Speech will not be the vehicle of learning English. We are not anti speech; we are not against the notion that deaf people should learn to use as much speech as they can. What we are against is the idea that learning the content and learning the language should be limited to whether or not a child speaks. Thus, while speech is important, reading and writing is critical.

Eight: Says the same thing in another way. "Speech is not the primary vehicle for the learning of a spoken language."

Number Nine: "The development of speech-related skills must be accomplished through a program that has available a variety of approaches." In general, deaf education has come up with one approach that they think meets everybody's needs equally. In fact, particularly in speech-related areas you need a variety of approaches.

Ten: "Deaf children are not defective models of hearing children." [applause] So the goal of such a curriculum would not be to make the children seem more like hearing children. It would be to make them more successful as deaf children. So rather than fixing them, we would try to teach them.

Eleven: This we stole from the Commission Report[4]: "There's nothing wrong with being deaf." Children should not be punished for being deaf; they should be given the same rights to access to an education as other children. Not only that, there's a lot there's positive about being deaf. It is not the end of the world. And for that reason the curriculum that we propose would talk about

[4]Commission on Education of the Deaf (1988). *Toward Equality. A Report to the Congress of the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

deafness in a positive way and relate aspects of using the language and interacting in the deaf community in a positive way.

Number Twelve: "The least restrictive environment for deaf children is one in which they may acquire a natural sign language, and through that language achieve access to a spoken language and the content of the school curriculum." You know, this again is different than the way that least restrictive environment was intended. In its definition least restrictive environment means that environment most like that of a normal hearing child. We think we should use the word "restrictive" more correctly and say that a mainstream classroom is extremely restrictive for a deaf child with hearing parents. There is no access to language.

That's it.

Responses from Panel

David M. Denton

Superintendent, Maryland School for the Deaf

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is David Denton. I've been director of the Maryland School for the Deaf for the past 22 years. Those of you who know me realize that I'm not unaccustomed to addressing controversial issues, and in some ways I rather enjoy it. I look at this seminar as a remarkable event because it represents a milestone: the next logical move in what I would call the search for a more rational perspective regarding ASL. In fact, I have entitled my response, "All or Nothing at All: A Search for a More Rational Perspective." I don't mean to imply that there is anything irrational about the perspective that has already been presented, but I hope that in the next few minutes I can help us look at the whole issue from the point of view of how we got where we are, keeping in mind the need for a clear historical perspective.

I also want to explain to you that it's my practice and my nature to be personal in the way I attempt to analyze or understand a problem. So, forgive me for the involvement of self in this discussion, and also understand that I have a tendency to look at things from a philosophical point of view and attempt to grab the bigger picture if I can.

[At this point, Dr. Denton begins to read from a previously prepared paper.]

In my first reading of *Unlocking the Curriculum*, I became aware of a wide range of feelings . . . deep feelings which the statements of the writers provoked. Almost simultaneously, I felt a sense of celebration and one of dread. I was carried back more than twenty years to another time when the issues were just as provocative, perhaps even more provocative than the issues discussed in this paper. The important thing for us to recognize is the relationship between the two times.

This paper is a remarkably appropriate contribution to our search for understanding where we go from here. It is a very sharp reflection of the times. As I reflect back over the years on the progress of the movement leading up to this symposium and look to the future in a thoughtful way, I feel very much in tune with the sentiments and goals of this paper. Perhaps I would differ with some of the assumptions, but most of all, I am compelled to call attention to the profound importance of our examining the issues put forward in this paper from a clear historical perspective. For a moment, however, allow me to share some thoughts which may help you understand more fully the way in which I understand and define myself with respect to deafness and deaf people.

In the corner of my office is a bookcase with a glass front holding bound volumes of publications which cover the entire life and history of the Maryland School for the Deaf. Even a casual search of these old books will reveal truly remarkable things about the place, the people, and the events which have shaped the school's history. On another wall is a large color photograph of the members of the Maryland School for the Deaf family attending the recent 24th Quadrennial Reunion of the Alumni Association. That photograph and the rows of bound publications symbolize the multi-generational character of the school. Throughout this most recent gathering of the alumni, there was a spirit of celebration, beginning with the assembly Friday evening and continuing through noon on Sunday when the families began to disperse. There were old-timers in their upper eighties who had driven a thousand miles or more to come home to this one place among all the places in their accumulated experiences which had given them cultural identity and a feeling of personal value. Even now, I have the feeling that there is something remarkable about that place. That conviction, which is in my heart and in my mind, continues to be affirmed and reaffirmed by the experiences taking place within the life of this school. The single most powerful force that

weekend was the common connection each of us had with the place. The feeling that I had was scarcely different than the feeling I have when I am among my own people at a family reunion somewhere in the mountains of North Carolina. Each one of us was able to claim and celebrate membership in this special body. At times I felt like I had the letters "MSD" burned into my soul because it has been here in this school that I have been able to develop a fuller and clearer sense of self. It has been here that I have stumbled upon that larger purpose, and over the past twenty-two years this institution has been my anchor.

These are remarkable times, and remarkable things have happened in our world, the world of deaf education. During the history-making events that occurred less than one year ago here on Kendall Green, I lived, sensed, watched, and experienced with you the realizati[illegible] dream . . . a dream that began generations and generations ago . . . a dream that perhaps my own Maryland School for the Deaf helped give form and definition to . . . . The appointment of I. King Jordan as President of Gallaudet University was possible in 1988, at least to a degree, because of the announcement in 1968 by that little school in Frederick, that we embraced, we supported, and we proclaimed the right of *every deaf child* to *unrestricted, "total communication."* That announcement put the school squarely in the crossfire of opposing forces, but because our case was stated in terms of *human rights*, because we stuck with that position once we had announced it, and because of the investment of time and energy in the dissemination of the Total Communication philosophy, what began as a bold, possibly reckless editorial statement evolved into a full-blown *human rights movement* which swept the country and rapidly moved overseas. That movement helped give legitimacy to sign language. It has been through the language of the deaf, American Sign Language, that the public has come to recognize, understand, and even appreciate to an increased degree the phenomenon we refer to as deaf culture. Once American Sign Language achieved public recognition, deaf people in every layer of society have been able to speak for themselves.

More than any other single factor in that wonderful week last spring, the discovery of this culture by millions of Americans and the instinctive identification of the American people with the student movement led to the appointment of King Jordan, a deaf man, as President of Gallaudet. We were a part of that event, before it happened and while it was happening. Now we must give thoughtful consideration to our responsibility in the future. This paper represents the next logical, predictable, and appropriate development in this evolution. Things such as the appointment of a deaf President to Gallaudet and other remarkable events in human history do not take place in an isolated, disconnected way. The point of these remarks is that we must be aware of our history, how we got where we are, and we must have a clear sense of where we should be going in the years ahead.

Probably all of us share the concerns laid out in this paper and we share too in the hope for a real breakthrough. The authors seem to have concluded that education of the deaf in America has failed and that this perceived failure can be tied to two factors: linguistic access to curricular content and the cycle of low expectations. I personally don't think the indictment of failure against the education of the deaf is completely accurate. I think there are factors beyond the two identified in this paper which have overriding influence on the quality of education of the deaf in our country. In my judgment, we would be misreading history if we reach the conclusion that the state of affairs in deaf education in America in 1989 was brought about by the failure of Total Communication.

It is critical that we consider that the success of the Total Communication movement was based in part on the fact that it was defined and interpreted and promoted as a *civil rights* or *human rights* issue and not as an issue limited to *communication methodology*. From the time of the Milan Conference in 1880, leading up to and including the so-called "Revival of the Rochester Method"

in the early 1960s, efforts to secure legitimacy and public acceptance of manual communication centered primarily around debates in methodology. The first definition, to my memory and knowledge, of Total Communication was included in an editorial released by the Maryland School for the Deaf in 1968. The opening sentences in that definition are: "By Total Communication we mean the right of a deaf child to learn to use all forms of communication available to develop language competence. This includes the full spectrum of language modes: child-devised gestures, speech, formal sign language, fingerspelling, speechreading, and reading and writing . . . ."

Those persons responsible for early dissemination of the Total Communication concept, and I am speaking primarily about Maryland, did not think of nor describe the issue as an issue of methodology. It was seen in a much more fundamental sense. The following paragraph was taken from a paper published by the Maryland School for the Deaf sometime in 1969 and it is simply entitled "Total Communication":

> Total Communication recognizes the hierarchy of visual systems from the simplest gestures used by the very young deaf child in his first efforts to abstract his own meanings to the most complex syntactical sign system. As the deaf child learns to communicate more complex ideas, his need for sophisticated signing grows. However, Total Communication recognizes that the American Sign Language or Ameslan holds a special place in the lives of all deaf people and that it is the root of all sign languages possessing dramatic, and emotional characteristics which have an appeal to all people, both hearing and deaf.

The negative influence of the ageless dispute over methods was finally put into a more rational perspective by the introduction of the Total Communication concept. Total Communication was seen as a multisensory approach recognizing the fundamental legitimacy of both manual and oral modes of communication, but recognizing first of all the absolute right of every deaf child to communication access, in whatever form. The humanitarian characteristics of the Total Communication movement have helped revolutionize deaf education all over the world. Its wide acceptance and popularity has resulted in the dramatic burst of growth in the usage of sign language. With the public acceptance of sign language has also come public recognition of the viability of the deaf culture and the elevation of deaf persons into positions of responsibility and prominence in a variety of fields.

The Total Communication revolution, which occurred during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and which has made such a profound difference in the lives of all of us, was successful in part because of that early coalition among deaf persons, parents of deaf children, and professionals in deaf education. For generations, I am sure, deaf adults across America had recognized that the parents of deaf children represented the deaf community's means of access to professionals in education of the deaf. It was through this coalition of parents and deaf adults that the minds and hearts of professional educators were touched in a new and different way. There was a feeling of release and newfound freedom as the parents of young deaf children responded to the overwhelming acceptance offered them by deaf adults in America. Even though the term "deaf culture" was not as widely used at that time as it is today, I suspect that those groups of persons, as diverse as they were, sought and shared a sense of community in a movement which helped both *unite* and *free* them at the same time. All of us who were involved, I am certain, thought of ourselves as belonging to and having membership in that community.

Perhaps if we all have membership in the same community . . . a community of thought . . . a community of purpose . . . a community of dreams and shared ideals . . . then possibly we all share

brotherhood within the deaf culture. Surely, the mother of a child who is deaf is not denied membership in that culture in which her child is expected to grow, separated by some silent boundary from those who will be his adult role models. Surely, we are more than prisoners to the condition of hearing or not hearing. From a deeply personal point of view, I do not perceive myself as being outside the deaf culture. Although I hear, deafness is a central influence in my life.

The early response to the promise of Total Communication was so warm, so enthusiastic, so hopeful. It was inevitable that because of the remarkable public interest in sign language that the many forms of manually coded English, so-called "Signed English" systems, would be developed. Whatever judgments the professionals today would reach regarding the proliferation of Signed English systems . . . their value and appropriateness, their place in educational history, must be based upon the knowledge that these signed systems enabled a whole generation of hearing parents of deaf children across America to begin to interact and to communicate with their deaf children with a degree of freedom and understanding not possible before. The use of the term "Sign Supported Speech" or "SSS," used by the authors in this paper, appears to be deliberately provocative and takes away from the deeper purpose of the paper. The use of this term is a clear and dramatic reflection of the mood of the times, but its use may prevent us from benefitting from lessons of recent history.

The tensions reflected in this paper are a reminder of earlier controversies which, although not fully resolved, are much less volatile than was true a few years ago. These tensions are predictable responses to violent upheaval and change within the broad community of deaf persons and in the things affecting their lives most profoundly: sign language, communication, and education. Ironically, today's arguments and accompanying tensions could never have occurred had it not been for the remarkable growth in the use of manual communication. Interestingly, the root causes of these debates represent one of our most basic reasons for celebration.

My grandson is in love with Linda Bove, is fascinated with signing, and probably wouldn't appreciate the finer points of our current preoccupation in deaf education: the ASL/SSS issue. Do we really need this? It is not so much that we must have all or nothing at all, but that we find accommodation the common ground. In looking back over the past 22 years at MSD, I realize that the hundreds of hearing parents of our deaf students are not fluent signers in ASL, but they are, by and large, able to initiate and maintain conversation with deaf persons to a degree not thought possible a generation ago. I am concerned that another bitter internal dispute could cost us that next generation of searching, stumbling, and in some ways desperate hearing parents of deaf children.

I am enthusiastic about the basic thrust of this paper and its perception of ASL as the first language and as the language of instruction for deaf children. I am particularly grateful that a model program has been set forth for consideration. I would be surprised if the basic principles in this paper did encounter general resistance throughout the field of education of the deaf in America. I think it is fundamentally important, however, that we recognize how far we have come and understand in reality that education of the deaf is in a period of transition. The matter of transition also includes ASL. American Sign Language is certainly not a static language frozen forever on some time-line. ASL has undergone tremendous growth over the past 25 years. If this is true, how do we define what is meant by ASL? If some, maybe more deaf Americans are using more signs and different signs than they were using 25 years ago, is not ASL evolving? With the infusion of the so-called "English" signs, is ASL becoming more like English? If the rate of growth

and change in ASL that has been experienced over the past 25 years continues for the next 25 years, what will be the nature of ASL?

It would seem that for those of us who have a responsibility to help provide a first-class education for deaf children, it would be counter-productive to dissipate time or energy in more debate. It seems to me, however, that it is crucial that we understand that our most fundamental tool, sign language, no matter how we define it, is undergoing dramatic and perhaps permanent change. We must understand as best we can at what stage we are in this evolutionary process.

Similar tensions are being felt in other countries. This very week I read in the *The British Deaf News*[5] an interview with Dr. George Montgomery, a psychologist affiliated with Edinburgh University and Donaldson's School for the Deaf, who has been fighting for probably 30 years for the right of deaf children in the United Kingdom to be able to be educated with sign language. He was asked by the interviewer, "Which language, Dr. Montgomery, do you think best--BSSE (that would be the equivalent, I guess, of SSS in this paper) or BSL (British Sign Language)." Dr. Montgomery replied, "That's like asking which leg I like best. Rather than hopping along on one language, children need both the language of the deaf community and the language of the world of education, examinations, computers, and TV subtitling--not to forget that of their hearing friends and relatives in their own family." In response to the question regarding the special place of BSL in the languages of deaf people, Dr. Montgomery replied, "Yes, I've always taken that for granted. It is the only language special to our deaf people. English is shared by all kinds of people all over the world. BSL is a beautiful language, with its own grammar, adapted over the centuries to suit the visual, gestural medium. No one familiar with the work of Dorothy Miles[6] could help being fascinated and impressed by it." Then he went on to say something which struck me; it almost startled me. He said, "But it's a language, not a religion. Let us never forget that the deaf are not made for sign languages, but that sign language is made for the deaf. It does no service at all to deaf people to regard them as sign objects."

Later in the interview Dr. Montgomery states, "Let deaf people be valued for themselves and their own achievements, not just for their language. For as Miles points out, language is the vehicle for culture. It's a tool to thought in civilization and not the narrowly exclusive concern of anyone except perhaps linguists and interpreters when their funds are running low." Now those of you who know Dr. Montgomery will recognize his biting humor, but he does have a remarkable gift for helping us maintain a balanced perspective during a time that's so deeply loaded emotionally. He gives us pause in stating that the key factor in deciding which language must be first is the language of the home. And this I think we've all got to consider, particularly in view of the statements made in this paper. Dr. Montgomery makes a statement, and this is his, not mine, and I quote him: "It's just psychologically daft to bring up a child in a language different from that of mother and the rest of the family. What is certain is that deaf people need both languages and that schools *can* provide this to a degree deaf adults who endured an oral-only education would find hard to believe."

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[5]Hays, J. (1989). Face to Face [An interview with G.W.G. Montgomery]. *The British Deaf News*, *20*(2).

[6]Dorothy Miles is a deaf actress and poet from Wales, educated both at the Manchester School for the Deaf in England and at Gallaudet College, where she graduated with distinction in 1960. She is perhaps best known for her performances in a natural sign language of poetry she initially wrote in English. In 1976 she published *Gestures: Poetry in Sign Language* (Northridge, California: Joyce Motion Picture Company). Miles is currently affiliated with the British Deaf Association.

It is not the goal of schools or parents to impose the hearing person's bias on children who are deaf. It is more precisely a shared goal to attempt to develop and release human potential in all areas which can enhance the lives of the individual, both within and without the deaf culture. Thoughtful parents, educators, deaf adults need to understand the mixed responsibility of helping deaf children develop and maintain distinct cultural identity and the need to be integrated into the large culture. These needs sometimes seem to be in conflict and nowhere is this more evident than in our schools. This apparent conflict is evidenced by the mainstreaming vs. school-for-the-deaf issue. All of us are caught up in this struggle, this need and this desire to maintain clear and strong cultural identity while being able to assimilate into the larger culture. This is not an invasion of the deaf culture by hearing people. It has long been a deep wish in the hearts of America's deaf people that sign language would achieve legitimacy, widespread recognition and acceptance. This has happened and one of the inevitable results is a modest change in how deaf culture in America is defined.

The deaf community in America has a rich and sparkling history, it has traditions and heroes, it has substance and vitality, and it deserves a future. The preeminence of America's deaf culture in comparison with the deaf culture in any other nation in the world is not the result of an accident. The elevation of deaf people all across America into positions of responsibility in a variety of fields is an indication that profound change is underway. When we stop to reflect for a moment upon the issues being considered and debated today, we begin to appreciate that something of fundamental importance has happened in this country in the past twenty-five years with regard to the status of deaf persons within the broad culture.

When examined from the point of view of classroom methodology . . . when defined as the old "simultaneous method" . . . when seen as the halting attempts to communicate by a mother of a young child recently introduced to the world of deafness, Total Communication can certainly be criticized. When seen, however, as the heart and soul of a *civil rights movement* which helped change forever the public's perception of deaf people and the language that has been the vehicle through which their culture has been transmitted down through the generations, then Total Communication may very well be one of the more remarkable things to have happened in this century.

The state of education of the deaf in America and the comparative degree of failure of the present generation of students across the land as measured by standardized tests is probably as much the result of fragmentation of educational services and the scattering of deaf children, thousands of them, into isolated classrooms across the country, as it is the result of inherent problems with Total Communication. Deaf children in America today are experiencing isolation to a greater degree than at any other time in recent history. Ironically, the *isolation* of deaf children is occurring largely through the misapplication of a concept which promotes the *integration* of deaf children into the mainstream. The bitter lessons of history clearly tell us that the most certain way to destroy a culture is to isolate its members.

Those fragmented experiences making up the school day within the lives of today's population of deaf children are scarcely enough to permit them to derive a sense of cultural identity, a sense of self in the world. They represent only a fraction of what is needed for the nourishment of a fully educated person. Whatever steps we take to embrace and implement the kind of model program proposed in this paper, must be based on the recognition that the vast majority of hearing-impaired children in America are scattered into thousands of isolated situations across the country where there is very little educational support. Most of these children are the sons and daughters of

hearing people who have limited opportunity for contact with deaf adult role models. Also, perhaps 25% of these students are multiply handicapped. These conditions are the real enemy of educational success among our pupils, and it is going to require a united effort on the part of all of us to begin to reestablish, strengthen, and improve what has been built over the generations. The paper *Unlocking the Curriculum* represents a much-needed contribution to an agenda which is already full. From a personal point of view as well as a professional point of view, I am happy to embrace and support the contention that ASL can and should be the first language and I applaud the authors of this paper for bringing this whole matter into focus for us. I am particularly pleased that a model program has been included and I would expect that this paper will provoke substantial discussion, debate, and thought; and I believe too that it will result in efforts by educational programs to establish models of this kind. Fundamentally, the issue before us remains an issue of human rights and not simply curriculum and linguistic access. I believe those lasting successes and achievements gained by deaf people over the past quarter century have been built upon that growing element of trust among deaf persons, the parents of deaf children, and members of the professional establishment. I would venture that future successes will be built upon the strengthening and perpetuation of this coalition.

Thank you for your attention.

[applause]

[Dr. Karchmer] Thank you. We have time for just a couple of quick comments from any of the panel or authors.

[Dr. Johnson] Just a fast comment. It is not our view that deaf children should have only one language. It is our view that deaf children, to survive in the United States, need English, but that the approaches to teaching English that we have used so far have isolated them from access to ASL and have also not provided them with English. The factionalization and fragmentation of the deaf community that Dr. Denton referred to resulted in large part from the belief that SSS made possible short-term training in language of teachers so that they *could* teach in isolated and dispersed places. And it makes the assumption that SSS *is* a representation of English that is successful and that it is a language. SSS is not the language of the home. And to claim that teaching SSS is teaching the language of the home of deaf children of hearing parents is, in our view, not correct.

[applause]

[Dr. Karchmer] I'd like now to introduce Dr. Gustason.

Gerilee Gustason

Professor, Department of Education, Gallaudet University and
Executive Director, SEE Center for the Advancement of Deaf Children

Thank you. I feel a bit as though I'm on the hot seat. My name is Geri Gustason and many of you know me as one of the "SEE people." In fact, I feel as though I'm standing here with a "SEE" label across my chest!

I want to share with you at this time that one of the first things I did when I joined the faculty in the Department of Education as the "SEE lady" was to insist that the department require coursework in ASL. There are many things in this paper, in other words, that I fully agree with. I do have some questions, however, and some concerns about information not included in the paper. I would like to share these concerns with you now; then I will ask a few questions.

First . . . sorry?

[At this point, there is some confusion concerning which interpreters are needed.]

[Dr. Gustason] I thought we already had interpreters going on either side. I'm sorry. [To two interpreters] Come on back onto the stage, here.

[Once interpreters are in position, Dr. Gustason continues.]

Okay. I'm going to start again.

I see four areas in that paper that I would like briefly to discuss. First of all, the question about educational achievement. I agree that it is much too low. But I have a problem with the fact that the information in the paper on this subject is not really complete. I got into SEE in the first place for the very reason that I was not satisfied with deaf students' low achievement levels. I'm not at all satisfied with the fact that there are smart deaf kids out there reading at a 3rd-grade level. But I must ask the authors of this paper: What about research information that we *do* have? For example, how do you answer the questions raised by studies of oral education programs where it has been shown that children in those programs often achieve better than those in TC [Total Communication] programs? Secondly, how do you respond to some of the research that's coming out now regarding SEE kids that shows that those children read at grade level with hearing children? For example, in one small study[7] of twelve children whose ages ranged from 7 to 18--all in one SEE program--nine were reading at grade level and three were not, including one student in the 11th grade who was reading at the 9th-grade level. Even a 9th-grade level is surely a lot better than a 3rd-grade level. None of these students, by the way, had deaf parents. So I don't want to ignore the implications of these kinds of success.

Now, the second area of concern that I have relates to the signing skills of teachers. I agree some are really awful. That example that we just saw is pretty bad. And I've seen that bad too, and there is no excuse for that. But there are several problems that I am equally concerned with.

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[7]Moeller, M.P. et al. (1988). A longitudinal study of the achievement of deaf students in a program using Signing Exact English. Paper presented at a meeting of the American Speech-Hearing-Language Association, Boston, November 1988.

Teachers, for example, who can't understand the children. None of us like to walk into a classroom and see the children come in all excited and wanting to talk about what happened yesterday and see the teacher nod and nod and write on the blackboard, completely misunderstanding what the children have said. That's very, very frustrating. So I think we need to focus on sign skills, yes.

But I don't believe that the failure of many people to sign well in SimCom means that it can't be done. I reject that notion for precisely the same reason that I reject the idea that the failure of deaf kids in education means that deaf kids can't learn. That assumption is simply wrong. Why didn't you mention in your paper some of the research on SimCom? For example, you did mention Marmor and Petitto[8], but they had only two teachers in that study. You mentioned Supalla and he had one teacher and that's all.

Now, if you want small numbers you could look at Wodlinger-Cohen[9]. That study had three children, and the teachers were signing 85 percent of everything they said, including endings. Or, you could have bigger numbers--Luetke-Stahlman's study[10], who . . . she was not satisfied with three, so she looked at 25 SEE teachers and found that they were signing 89 percent of everything. Then she looked at four teachers and three parents, most of whom had been signing for less than three years. The results were that 90 to 100 percent of everything the subjects in that study signed they said. So I don't believe that SimCom can't be done. I *do* believe that many people don't SimCom well, but that's different.

That problem with signing skills is exactly why the SEE Center received a three-year federal grant. We are developing and trying out sign skill evaluations for teachers in the mainstream. We have 22 people advising us on that grant and many of them are deaf. So we are not looking at one kind of signing. How clear are you? How much do you get across? How much can you understand? These are very important questions. I really question the concept that SimCom is either not possible or somehow unable to accomplish these ends.

Okay. The third area I want to comment on is the matter of low expectations. How much do we expect deaf kids to learn? I also believe that many of us settle for too little. We have expectations set so low that deaf children live *down* to them, and that's a sin. I prefer to think that a child can become whatever he or she wants--a brain surgeon, for instance. Of course, reaching such a goal takes more than a month, but I think that if a student's education and experience were planned well enough, and if the student were to proceed step-by-step and benefit from regular evaluations, accomplishing such a goal is possible.

When I read the description of a model program outlined in this paper, however, I don't see the kind of step-by-step curriculum design that would enable children to get to the kind of success you apparently expect for them. What kind of program of *study* will get those children from where they

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[8]Marmor, G. & Petitto, L. (1979). Eye gaze and communication in a deaf classroom. *Sign Language Studies*. *54*, 11-30.

[9]Wodlinger-Cohen, R. (1986). The manual representation of speech by deaf children, their mothers, and their teachers. Paper presented at the Conference on Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research, Rochester, NY, June 1986.

[10]Luetke-Stahlman, B. (1988). SEE2 in the classroom: How well is English grammar represented? In G. Gustason (Ed.) *Signing English in Total Communication: Exact or Not?* Los Alamitos, CA: Modern Signs Press, Inc.

are to where they might aspire to go? How do we enable them to do that? I don't think that we can afford to ignore the research on this subject from regular education. We already have research with hearing children who are in inner city programs. What makes some of those programs successful? What makes a poor program *not* successful? The key factors have already been identified. High expectations is one. Strong leadership is another. And an organized curriculum is a third factor. We need to know how to teach kids, and we need to know how to evaluate, monitor, and track them. We need to learn from research on these matters from regular education. There are many programs for the deaf that suffer primarily from lack of a good curriculum. What one teacher does is not related to what the next teacher does. So there are many factors, not just communication. If communication *were* the only thing, then all hearing children with hearing parents in hearing schools would get fantastic educations. But we know that is not happening. So the problems include more than communication. Okay.

And my last point: Early exposure to the language, yes, I fully agree with that also. Obviously I disagree with regard to which language. Because those of us who developed SEE never said that if the child has deaf parents who use ASL that that's bad. It's not. That's fantastic. But we did say that hearing parents have a tough time. It's hard to accept sometimes that your child is not what you thought it would be. One hearing father said to me--this also was the guy who wrote the book entitled *Deaf Like Me*--he said it is the rare parent (the rare hearing parent) who can learn ASL and become fluent before the child grows up and leaves home.

So I think the problem is not that parents need to learn ASL. The problem is how do we help the parents help the children while they are still babies. And I am bothered by the concept . . . actually two things . . . and the first is of a deaf adult coming into the home to establish communication with the baby. What happens to the parent-baby bonding process? I want the parents to meet deaf adults. You bet. I want them to see what their kids can be. I want deaf adults as role models. But I don't want them to replace the parents.

Another thing: It was mentioned that speech and sign should be separate. Sometimes they are and sometimes they are not. Not all deaf people that I know always separate them. We have research with deaf mothers that says that deaf mothers both sign and speak to their babies. Are we telling them not to? Why can't we use the research from deaf mothers to learn what we *can* do to help hearing parents become better communicators? Not necessarily with ASL, but communication in any form that they can manage. Okay.

And then finally, I agree fully that there is nothing wrong with being deaf. Sometimes it's a pain in the neck. For example, when I want to call the plumber because a pipe has broken at 2:00 a.m. it's not fun when you can't use the phone easily. But I'm not proud that I have brown hair. It *is* brown. I'm not proud that I wear glasses. And I'm not proud that I'm deaf. That's simply me, okay? But I am very, very, *very* proud of what deaf people have accomplished. I'm very proud of that. And I want to see a deaf studies program because I want all deaf kids to know what deaf people have accomplished. And that's different.

So, I'm in full support of many of the concepts in the paper. I would like to see this model program tried as one option, so that parents could choose it. And the same with deaf parents. But I'm scared to death of anything that says it is *the* answer for all deaf children. I'm not so sure about that. I don't like force and it scares me. Thank you.

[applause]

Carol Padden

Associate Professor, Department of Communication
University of California, San Diego

I have a few remarks I'd like to make, but first I want to comment on one thing in particular. It is in reference to your [Gustason's] discussion of Supalla's work. I think that it is important to understand what he was trying to do. Perhaps because my area of specialty is research, I'm very sensitive to how people use the term.

[Padden is interrupted and asked to stand where some people can see her better.]

[Padden continues] May I proceed? Okay. I am sensitive to how people use the term "research." In particular, I'm very sensitive to how newspapers use it. They publish statements such as, "There is research," or "We have research that says this," or "They have research that proves such-and-such." But to judge what that means we need some detailed information about the nature of that research. What are the researchers' underlying premises? For example, if you were to describe clearly what Supalla's research is about, you wouldn't compare it with Luetke-Stahlman's work, because they were not investigating the same thing. You said that Supalla only looked at one teacher, while Luetke-Stahlman looked at 25, but they were not conducting the same type of study and their hypotheses and research questions were different. Their respective research experiments and methodology were also, consequently, different. If they *were* asking the same question they could be compared, but they were not.

So there appears to be some confusion about the question Supalla was trying to answer, which in fact was very important. Supalla was studying a group of deaf children who had no exposure to ASL, who grew up watching a teacher sign in SEE. His question was *not*: Did this teacher sign everything? His question was: While this teacher was signing in SEE, what type of signing did the deaf *students* use in response? He compared what the students used with what the teacher was using. For example, if the teacher used the initialized signs for "he," "she," and so on, or if she added the "s" inflection to "gives," did the children's production or structure include those? Also, did their signing include structures like directionality that the teacher never produced? So Supalla was asking fundamentally different questions from whether or not the teacher was clear or signed 89 or 90 percent of her spoken words.

Now, Supalla observed that there were many signs or structures that the teacher regularly produced that the students did not, which raises certain questions about the "learnability" of the teacher's productions. In other words, what can and do deaf students in such a situation learn? If the students were producing something that the teacher didn't, or if they didn't produce some things that she *did*, this means that there was some sort of a mismatch here. That mismatch is what worries us. We feel that, when ASL is used, there *is* a language match between teacher and deaf student. The match is better with ASL, we believe, than with a language invented by a committee. So, we need to be clear about Supalla's research; it is not the same as Luetke-Stahlman's. You can't compare them.

I have one other comment in response to Gerilee Gustason. You mentioned the issue of hearing parents with a deaf child having difficulty with the bonding process and implied that the paper said hearing parents must learn ASL to bond with their deaf child. The paper does not even mention the issue of bonding, but . . . let me back up. What did parents do before they had SEE? They

surely did *some*thing. We have many successful deaf people in this audience--teachers, etc.--whose parents were hearing, who managed to learn English very well without SEE. Why don't we study the process involved in that kind of success or study the process of deaf parents who somehow successfully use and convey English to their children? We know very little about that. I think your comments on parent-child bonding are confusing. I have problems with that aspect of your remarks.

[applause] [Padden leaves podium to get notes.]

About the paper, a copy was sent to me and I said, "Okay, fine." I didn't know what was in the paper until I received it. After reading it, I closed it and thought, "Finally, *finally* there's something happening!" This paper expressed many feelings and ideas that had been discussed for years at parties and dinners, etc. and were now finally being brought to everyone's attention. Now everyone could look at these ideas and analyze them from all angles. Some--really *many*--of the ideas in this paper, however, were quite new.

Anyway, there were so many different ideas that I decided I would just pick one. And I picked this particular one because it was something I had observed myself. As you may know, I have personally attended many different schools: a residential school for the deaf, an oral school, and a mainstream program. The paper confirmed my thoughts on what I had observed as a student in those schools. Let me quote a sentence that appears on page 21 in the paper. It says, and I quote, "Every classroom should have a deaf teacher and a hearing teacher working together, the apparent additional cost of two teachers in the classroom offset by doubling the number of students in classes to an average class size of 16." That's how they are going to justify the cost of two teachers.

Now, on page 3 they talk about all the money that is now spent on classes, such as on teachers' aides, support services, technology, etc. The number of students in classes, they say, is actually becoming *smaller*. We have some pre-school classes with 4, 5, or 6 students and a teacher's aide. The ratio is tremendous. That's an incredibly small class size. This is an interesting concept, to enlarge the class to 16. I like that. I'd like to discuss that idea and link it to one caution I have about the paper.

I really like this idea of a larger class size, because I think the preference for small classes is based on a pathological model of deafness: you know, the attitude of pitying poor deaf people because they can't hear, and all that, so we should lavish lots of money on them, etc. Well, I'd like to introduce yet another, related model, which I'll call the "psychological model." This model espouses that we need to control how much information we give to a deaf student. According to this view, we have to devote so much attention to each individual student that we can't possibly have large classes. This model also holds that there must be a one-to-one, teacher-student relationship in which the teacher carefully controls each child's input. If a child looks away from the teacher toward another student, the teacher must reprimand the child and say, "No! Look back at me!" The teacher feels that she is the only person in the class who can provide valid input. The children in the classroom may be inept at using English or sign language and, therefore, may not be good models for each other. The teacher wants the children to look directly at her, so she can constantly bombard them with controlled information. She assumes that, if left to fend for themselves, the children will be lost. If they interact with each other, they will only get negative input.

I think this whole idea is basically flawed. The paper alluded to it, but not specifically. And I think it is important to discuss . . . let's see, what's the word . . . not "learning environment" . . . I want to call it "learning practices" or "activities" and how people exchange information. The key would

be to encourage more interaction and information-sharing among everyone in the class. For example, the students could be teachers for each other or, depending on the situation, the adults present could become either teachers or students themselves while interacting with the children. If the class size were doubled, there would be much more interaction, more talking back and forth, and more sharing among the students. The teacher would ultimately be in control of everything, of course, but the students would also be learning from each other. And the reason that we need to *share* control more is because it gives more opportunity to the students.

I've seen some terrible things in mainstreamed settings. Some deaf children are very isolated at home, and then when they get to school they have to line up and attend strictly to the teacher or interpreter. They are not allowed to interact with others. So it's a one-to-one situation again. The students don't have the sense of being placed in a variety of interesting learning situations. A healthier situation, it seems to me, would be one in which you have a range of students at a variety of academic levels who must learn to adjust their communication to meet the needs of their fellow students. I think that learning to communicate that way is an important part of education; it's not the teacher alone who should give input to the child. With larger classes there would be more variation in each child's input. That may be more frightening for teachers, because they are used to being in a more predictable, controlled environment.

Now, in my department, the Department of Communication [at UCSD], there has been a lot of discussion of these matters. Many of us are now more involved in classroom activities and there appears to be more student-student as well as teacher-student interaction as a result, especially around computers. For example, there is a project that I'm working on with IBM that involves using a very expensive computer in the classroom. When people learn how expensive the computer is, they always think about how expensive it would be to have a computer for each student. It might cost as much as $100,000 if you had ten kids. But instead of thinking that way, we need to think of having *groups* of children sharing the use of one computer so the kids can interact and learn the whole concept of sharing as well as how to run a computer. Students can learn to talk to each other about both how to use the computer and how to share control of the situation. In my opinion, the structure of the educational system needs to change to allow more such sharing of control.

Another reason we ought to allow more sharing is that teachers are not always the ones who have the best input. As I said before, we don't know much about how deaf kids--with such widely varying backgrounds--learn. For example, we don't know much about how deaf parents teach their deaf children to read, whether they point out individual words or not. One thing that I've found is that deaf parents often encourage deaf children to divide a word in order to learn it. My parents, for example, divided my name "Carol" into "car" and "o-l," and this doesn't even follow syllables or sounds. We need to look at other ways that deaf parents advise their deaf children about how to look at text. We don't know much about that, and we need research in this area, but at the same time we shouldn't say, "Let's wait until the research is complete." Why not allow a little more shared control in classrooms as a first step. Then children may teach each other in ways that are very effective, that teachers currently are unaware of.

I would like to mention again, and I know that I am repeating myself, but schools have in many ways become prisons for deaf children. I know that is a very strong statement, but this is an emotional topic, and schools or classrooms *have* become prisons. Deaf children are isolated in small classes and are not given enough opportunity to mix and interact with other people. They need to see more of what's going on in their environment. I want to see more mix and flexibility in their experience, so they will be enabled to pick things up in ways we don't fully understand yet.

Now, I have another caution concerning the paper. I understand the emphasis on ASL and I have no argument with that. You all know my position. I feel that ASL is a very important part of a deaf child's upbringing. I also have no argument with the paper's concept of having both a hearing teacher and a deaf teacher in the classroom. But I want to emphasize that it's important for us to learn more about just how information gets conveyed in such a situation. For example, suppose a class is dealing with an English sentence. How do the teachers discuss that sentence with the children? To analyze this particular "activity," as I call it, we really need to look at everything that's happening in the resulting dialogue and examine all the exchanges that take place; it doesn't seem sufficient to focus only on the ASL portion of that situation. We know that the child who has deaf parents uses ASL in such a discussion, but what about the children who are just learning ASL? How do they exchange information? How do they interact with each other? It's a very complicated situation. Please understand that I'm not saying ASL is unimportant, because it is; but we also need to focus on the context of the activity in which ASL is used. That's the most important thing, and ASL is a part of that process. How does communication occur? How do we interact? How do misunderstandings occur? And how do we repair situations if misunderstandings do occur? So my caution is that we mustn't overlook the social contexts in which ASL may be used.

Another caution with regard to this paper: It seems as though something is missing. I'm sure that the authors know about this, but we need to recognize and state it. I am referring to the issue of class differences. Hearing parents, for example, are not all alike, but come from different socioeconomic classes. Some are middle class and some are working class and they have different ways of raising children. At school it is sometimes assumed that deaf children are not influenced by their families' backgrounds because they are deaf, but of course many aspects of how these children are raised have important effects, and the curriculum must take into account the resulting class differences. Consequently, we need to understand how people from the various socioeconomic classes typically raise their children. We also need to understand differences between middle and working class *deaf* parents' ways of raising their children. Both deaf and hearing middle class parents tend to put a lot of emphasis on English, so how do they communicate with their children? This must be understood. When the children arrive at school, teachers need to be sensitive to each child's socioeconomic background as they try to determine how best to deal with the children. For the school to meet the needs of the different socioeconomic groups, in other words, it should not assume that all deaf children are the same.

I raise this issue because the paper makes a lot of what I would call "middle class" assumptions. In the area of parental involvement, for instance, it assumes that schools adopting its principles will be working with parents who *can* become involved, who can afford to take time off work during the day. Working class parents cannot do that. They cannot afford to lose that income. So schools have to look at parents' economic situations and needs and incorporate those factors into their plans and assumptions. Shirley Brice Heath[11], Sarah Michaels[12], and others, for instance, have shown how class can play an important role in the matching or *mis*matching of school and home life. I know the authors are aware of the relationship of class to education, but I think its importance should have been better recognized in the paper.

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[11]Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[12]Michaels, S. (1981). Sharing time: Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy. *Language in Society, 10*(3), 423-430.

As I have said, with regard to the classroom size being increased, I support that idea. I also like the idea of daycare for deaf kids. A deaf teacher and a hearing teacher working together, I like that idea very much. You know, we shouldn't wait until we have research to prove that having a deaf teacher and a hearing teacher working together succeeds. We should go ahead and do it and conduct research as it is going on. We can have deaf teachers modeling ASL and hearing teachers modeling English, but it can also be the reverse; that's fine. We need to see how deaf people explain English. For example, the point I made about writing a few minutes ago. And I'd like to know how deaf parents tell their deaf children about speech. A deaf teacher could do that too. And a deaf teacher could discuss what hearing people tend to do when they look at English, and how you might say things to hearing people when you approach them. Similarly, a hearing teacher could discuss how deaf people use ASL from a hearing person's perspective. The important thing would be for both teachers to be competent in both languages, ASL and English. We should not assume, by the way, that deaf people always use ASL. They are often equally competent in both languages.

Okay, my last point concerns objectives. We see deaf people who are now graduating from high school and furthering their education in college. But you know, not all hearing people go to college. I really don't think we can say that going to college is the goal of an educational program, but what is? Is it to teach reading and writing? I support that concept. To develop skills? Yes. I think one of those skills for deaf children is how to interact with hearing people, and I support that as a goal of their education. But one sensitive issue and the reason that I am here and the reason I feel very emotional about it standing here is that when you . . . this is very difficult to talk about . . . when we look at deaf kids, when we are teaching deaf kids, we most of all want them to become people. We see some deaf children who seem to be empty robots with blank stares, and we know that perhaps they didn't learn a language until the age of 13 or 14, or maybe they went to an oral program where they couldn't understand and then picked up sign language later, and it was too late. I think a real educational program should have deaf children who are truly there, who are alive, who are social beings. You know, the goal that they eventually go to college is a good one, but we first of all want them to be people. You all know what I mean. I'm sure you do. Thank you.

[applause]

David S. Martin

Dean, School of Education and Human Services
Gallaudet University

I'd like to thank the authors and Dr. Karchmer for the opportunity to respond to this paper and participate in this seminar. And I'd like to begin with a very strong commendation to all concerned for having brought this paper to our attention. I think that it's done a fantastic service to the issues and to the debate which must happen.

One of the problems of being fourth or fifth on a panel . . . and Roberta, I am sure you will feel the same . . . is that most of your ideas have been borrowed or stolen. But that's fine.

Teaching is a very complicated act. The act of teaching is so complex that we can have two people, two different human beings, with the same group of kids, under the same conditions, trying the same methodology, and get different results and different achievements. Why? There's a lot we don't know yet.

My beginning and ending point to the authors is, I really hope that you have a chance to disseminate this paper widely. I'd like to give you some suggestions that perhaps might clarify a few things, because I think that I want to see this paper get the kind of attention that it deserves. I'd like to talk about several points of agreement or support, some areas where I disagree or I would suggest some clarification, and then finally some recommendations for needed additional study.

First, in the areas of agreement: I would repeat what has been said several times this afternoon about the problem of low expectations. Some of our work[13] in improving the thinking skills of hearing impaired adolescents has proved once again that low expectations have no place in educating hearing impaired learners. What do we do about that? Well, I would commend the paper, first of all, for bringing it to our attention. Secondly, we have to incorporate this idea into the methods used to prepare teachers, so that one way or another, during both pre-service and in-service training, we accomplish whatever is necessary to remove low expectations. Low expections, however, exist across many groups--not just teachers--which raises an immediate research problem that I'll address in a few minutes.

I would also commend the authors for having identified a related but separate problem, and that is, of course, the view that deaf children are in some way "defective." For the same reasons, we've got to remove that notion and there are various strategies that people in this field have to develop to make that happen. Part of the problem, I believe, relates to parents' attitudes and what happens in those first days after hearing parents learn that they have a deaf child. That's where some of those negative attitudes and expectations begin. They are not limited to the schools sometimes.

I would also repeat the problem that has been identified several times and support the idea that "least restrictive environment" has been badly misinterpreted. Fortunately, right now, with the current change in the federal administration, we may have an opportunity--through possible changes

[13]Dr. Martin has extensively studied the effects of various approaches to facilitating deaf students' cognitive development.

in Public Law 94-142 and other policy changes--to make some differences in that area. And I hope that everyone in this room will do everything he or she can to make that a reality. The least restrictive environment for Child A is not necessarily the least restrictive environment for Child B. We know that at both the state and federal policy levels there has been a misapplication of that idea, not to mention among some educational administrators, parents, and teachers. I will freely admit that.

I would like to see us emphasize something that's only been referred to indirectly this afternoon and that is the recruitment of additional numbers of deaf teachers into the profession once again. There's no question that there has been a decrease in recent years. There are specific strategies that can make that happen and that will be to everyone's benefit.

I would like to see us try a model like this one that is proposed that is based on some concepts of bilingualism. We had better not try to re-invent a lot of wheels, however. There are many people teaching in California, Texas, and Florida who are pretty good at bilingual education. And I would like to see us try and borrow some of those methods and experiment with those in classrooms and training programs, as one possible approach that clearly deserves to be tried. At the same time, that will only work if we incorporate into training programs for future and current teachers opportunities for learning ASL.

Now, there are some practical considerations related to that goal that we don't have time to discuss fully this afternoon. But I believe there are some easy solutions if we take the time to plan carefully. One example might be the expectation that, regardless of where a person was planning to become a teacher, he or she needs, on entering a preparation program, to come early and spend a number of weeks in an introductory situation with ASL. I will admit, and we all know, these individuals will not become proficient in ASL--if they are hearing people--in that environment or in that short a span of time. No, not at all. But, that is a beginning and if it precedes the beginning of a formal training program, then that permits some improvement, potentially.

Having expressed all these points of agreement with the authors, I would like to move to some areas of caution, or requests for clarification, or some disagreement also.

On page 14 the paper discusses a difficulty with an entire group of people in this country who "thrive on the failure of deaf education." I think that's a bit of an overstatement and I was happy to see that, in other places in the paper, you discuss the large numbers of well-intentioned professionals who work with deaf education. So I would just like to suggest that perhaps you should modify or remove that first statement, or make it consistent with the other, because this inconsistency may weaken the power of the point you wish to make.

I was as disturbed as anyone on this stage or in this room by the transparency. I would also add, however, that in the training of a teacher what happens between entry into the program and exit from the program is only a first stage. Teachers become professionals over a gradual period of time and their development, theoretically, should be constant. Why do I bring that up? Simply because when we have situations like the one shown on the transparency, we need to place part of the responsibility on inadequate supervisory or monitoring systems and a lack of appropriate in-service training to ensure that teachers remain current with the field. And that's a shared responsibility within the profession. Teacher training at the beginning of a teacher's career is only part of the problem. So I would hope that we could broaden the concept of responsibility to give

the goal of improving signing a realistic chance not only to get underway, but also to be monitored and evaluated effectively over the full span of a teacher's professional development.

Let's come back to some research questions. I think that there's no question that by giving a fair chance to a bilingual approach, we would be doing a service to knowledge about bilingual approaches in general, in addition to potentially helping many deaf learners. But I think that the situation is much more complex than that. Several people on the panel have already referred to some areas, for example, where it *is* complex. Let's look for a moment at one of those.

A number of researchers and others in the field have indicated that the linguistic difficulties encountered by many deaf children in school are complicated or confounded by experiential *lacks*, or--to use the word that is more often, perhaps unfortunately, used in some of the literature--*deficits*. Many deaf children have a lack of world experiences. Now I say the linguistic difficulties are confounded because, obviously, the way in which a person processes information and real-world experience is affected by language. But I don't think we are going to know some of the answers we want to know until we have separated those effects. Let me add to that two other areas: When you read educational research results, you sometimes come away feeling, "What do we really know?" and "How much we don't know yet." Results are confusing and conflicting and contradictory.

One of the few things that we know pretty well from the field of regular education research--and I thank Dr. Gustason for reminding us of the information available to us from that field, which we must not forget--is that socio-economic status is one of the few factors that can be repeatedly shown to have a strong effect on achievement: a positive correlation. Time and time again we see that result in inner city and suburban and rural area research. You don't have to repeat that research anymore. It started in the late 1950s and continued since that time. Well, if that is true and it is, then we have another layer, it seems to me, of complicating factors that mean we have to separate the effects of linguistic mode from experiential and from socioeconomic status. Now, we know from what was already said that there are situations where kids have come to school with oral backgrounds, who achieve very well. Well, why? I'm not a supporter of oralism myself. But what happens? Well, when you study the research itself, you find out that those kids' parents were very involved, participatory, and supportive of their children. So there's something happening there, and we need to separate that something out before we can give the linguistic analysis offered in the paper a fair test.

And finally, what we've talked about before: the problem of low expectations. That too confounds the situation, so I'd like to see us devise or develop experiments and studies in which we can see the separate effects of each of those factors. I'll come back to that in a few minutes.

Well, where do we go from here? I have several recommendations that I'd like to make to the authors. First, I would like your support and advice--not me personally only, but other people in the field of teacher preparation--on possible ways of beginning to incorporate some teaching and inclusion of ASL into pre-service programs. By the same token, one thing that is out of our control but needs to be paid attention to is what we should do about in-service education for the teachers who are out there right now.

Secondly, however, I would repeat what was said before: We have to be very careful about proposing a single model. I think that a single-model approach will only weaken the likelihood that necessary changes will be made. We know that we are living in a time right now in this country

when parent choice is taken *very* seriously. And it will continue to be. It has the strong support of Republication administrations and that's okay. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican is not important. The fact is that parents' right to choose is here and is an expectation of parents.

There are some schools where the incorporation of ASL in a formal policy way has been investigated. I know of one that's rather well-known where that policy decision was made and there was a withdrawal by parents of some of their children. I'm sorry about that but the point

is that we have to maintain some choices. And so I would hope that we could keep that in mind as we think about the reality of the classrooms and the communities that are out there.

Another proposal that I'd like to suggest is that we look at an experiment that's in process right now in a city in Michigan, developed by a professor you will have a chance to see and converse with this summer if you are able to go to the Cognition Symposium[14]. And that is a plan by which ASL, through in-service teachers, is being used as what is called an "intervention tool." Now, that's not teaching in ASL in the way that the authors would propose, I expect. But I see this approach as a bridge and a possible model that ought to be looked at, and it works like this. Teachers of deaf children, whether they themselves are deaf or hearing, are still involved with basically an English-based instructional system. However, the teachers in this group in this city have all had some in-depth, in-service education in ASL. The moment there is any teaching of a difficult concept or a misunderstanding of an idea in any particular subject area, ASL becomes the language of the moment. Now, that is something we ought to study. It's still in an experimental stage. But it is something that we would probably learn from as we proceed in this discussion through the coming months.

And finally, I'd like to repeat the need for seeking some external support for some controlled research that will allow us to separate some of the effects of linguistic from experiential and from expectation level and also from socio-economic status factors. We need to know right now and we don't know very well.

Again, I'd like to commend the authors for having done a fantastic job of expressing and articulating some ideas that needed to be said and I would say, please disseminate the paper widely after you make any revisions you would like to make. You need to know from the community at large in this country--parents, educators, administrators, policymakers--about their reactions too.

Thanks very much.

[applause]

[14]Held at Gallaudet July 5-July 7, 1989.

Roberta Thomas

Executive Director, American Society for Deaf Children

I can't believe there's anybody left in this room! [The seminar at this point has lasted about two hours.] You are all very brave and your endurance is fantastic!

I'm very glad that my son Jesse's name was corrected--the spelling. He's very sensitive on this issue. Only girls have an "i" and he's not a girl. [laughter]

I'm also glad that it was mentioned that I was the Education/Early Intervention Specialist at the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and have been an educational consultant for a long time. I say that not because I'm ashamed of being a parent, but I really want you to know that I didn't come here straight from the kitchen. [laughter]

This is like the seventh inning stretch. I thought if you laughed we'd get through the next 15 minutes. [applause]

The other day Jesse asked me what I knew about deafness before he was born. "Nothing," I answered. "You invented it."

Eleven years ago I came to Gallaudet for the first time. Jesse was two. That night Jesse got his arm stuck to the shoulder in the flagpole on stage. Amidst the resulting hysteria, which included the fire department and a group of deaf visitors being hysterical in French Sign Language, Jesse, with his free hand, signed "No problem." Although I have not seen literature on the subject, I know that "no problem" is basic in the lexicon of American Sign Language, and constitutes a kind of initiation into deaf culture. That night Jesse joined the deaf community. That summer I began my career as a professional parent, a role that shares a similar status with any deaf or minority person in the world of deaf education, or any education, for that matter.

Jesse and I have personally been fortunate. From the moment I knew that Jesse was deaf, many deaf and hearing persons advised me not only to sign but to make certain Jesse was given the opportunity to acquire ASL, an actual language intended for visual acquisition, and I did that. That summer at Gallaudet I met and spoke with William Stokoe, Charlotte Baker, Bob Johnson, Dennis Cokely, Harry Markowicz, and Carol Padden[15]. I also met Barbara Kannapell[16], the great pioneer of bilingual education for deaf people, who took the time to encourage and support this hearing parent and her deaf child. For ten years now I have been part of a small but dedicated army of deaf and hearing persons who have attempted to demonstrate both the failure of deaf education and the disregard for deaf persons and their culture that these systems also incorporate. [applause]

This working paper we are discussing today demonstrates with brilliant and painful clarity the

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[15]At that time, all of these individuals were either directly or indirectly affiliated with Gallaudet's Linguistics Research Laboratory.

[16]Kannapell, a deaf sociolinguist, is a well-known advocate of bilingual education programs (ASL/English) for deaf students. At that time, she was pursuing a doctorate in sociolinguistics at Georgetown University and was president of Deafpride, Inc., an advocacy group.

dreadful failure of deaf education, a failure that has been accepted and institutionalized in what we have all learned to call "deaf norms." The concept of "Sign Supported Speech" particularly clarifies the real content of what is often called Total Communication (TC), and should forever disarm any suggestion that TC is really manualism. The research accomplished and/or cited by this team, the conclusions of the Commission on Education of the Deaf, and the recent changes here at Mecca itself [laughter] which has a deaf leader installed through the initiative and action of deaf people, makes it now acceptable for the subject of ASL in deaf education to find a platform at Gallaudet, and I *am* glad for that.

I should like to address my comments to two areas: the reasons for the failure and the model itself. One should first note that the defenders of oralism, with or without sign support, will likely not like the conclusions of this paper, data notwithstanding. There is, first of all, major ignorance about what language is and how it works. But I think the real reason for rejecting these conclusions is that the model for success in deaf education has always, one way or another, been hearing, determined through a hearing perspective and therefore concerned with annihilating rather than accommodating the difference of deafness. This hearing model prevails because, as Harlan Lane, for example, has demonstrated, majority cultures always look upon minority cultures as deficient.

This month a new center was started in Rochester: The International Center for Hearing and Speech. Our language betrays our attitudes. When a center for deafness is called "Hearing and Speech," precisely what deaf people cannot do, then we have a model entirely constructed on hearing norms.

Deafness in our culture is stigmatized. The idea that deaf and normal can be compatible is, therefore, alien, because the model for normal is hearing. It is therefore no surprise that well-meaning, high-minded hearing educators see their goal as helping deaf children become as hearing as possible, even if these children are forced to sign, rather than speak, their English.

I answer a lot of letters and phone calls, and although I am not a professional scholar--the only non-doctor on this panel [laughter]--I have what is called in the research biz a "substantial amount of clinical observation" to report. [applause]

An educator from Missouri wrote and asked me whether I had any ideas about how to make parents force their babies to wear hearing aids. She said, and I quote, "I feel that if I can help one deaf child hear one tiny bit of sound, if I can make it possible for one deaf child to hear a train, [laughter] I will know that I have made a small difference in this deaf child's life." End of quote. The case for oralism, as you can see, can be very moving. [laughter] It is, however, completely irrational. I thought immediately of calling Art Schildroth[17] and asking him about collecting data concerning the number of deaf children who are hit by trains. [laughter]

In this same letter, this same deaf educator told me that *she* only presented *options* to parents, never suggesting a choice to them. She also noted despairingly, that it was just dreadful how parents couldn't accept their children's deafness. This woman evidently saw no relationship between her obsessive focus on hearing and the parents' difficulty in accepting deafness. Nor did she think that there was a moral component to choices in deafness relating to communication, language acquisition, and the right of deaf children to be deaf.

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[17]Arthur N. Schildroth is a Senior Research Associate in the Gallaudet Research Institute's Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies.

This letter is also a classic demonstration of how parents reflect the views of the professionals with whom they interact. It also makes me sad, because I am sure this educator does not intend to hurt deaf children or their vulnerable, frightened families. However unintentional, we *have* created an irrational system that no one would defend for any other human child. This I have personally learned, gradually.

I remember one day when my son Jesse was about five and his friends at his deaf school were in the playground with a deaf aide, all chattering away together happily in ASL. Jesse's teacher and I stood watching. She confessed to me--she signed English fluently--that she didn't understand a thing going on on the playground. It suddenly came to me, in a terribly epiphany, that there is something absolutely nuts about the fact that my child and his teacher didn't use the same language. Imagine your hearing children having a Hungarian teacher who had only studied Pidgin English for a year . . . [applause] . . . even for one day as a substitute. You'd be out on the street with picket signs. Larry Fleischer, the deaf dean at CSUN, tells the story of his deaf daughter's first IEP [Individualized Education Program]. Quote: "The entire focus was on my daughter's ears and mouth, and not on her, and certainly not on her education. I told them that I was interested in her education and not her ears and mouth." End of quote.

We have forever confused speech clinics with educational programs.

Here is another story which I have told before. (You may be lucky; you may not have heard it before.) [laughter] I was reading an essay of Alice Walker's--she wrote *The Color Purple*--she's a black woman. She told about her five-year-old daughter's kindergarten teacher in a small southern town: a great, warm, grandmotherly black woman. Walker said that she was glad that her black daughter could look into her black teacher's eyes and "see her history and glimpse her destiny." Deaf children are denied this reassurance. When my deaf son Jesse looks into my eyes, he can see that he is loved and cherished, that he is a member of the family and the family of men and women. But he cannot see his history or glimpse his destiny, because I am not deaf. Only deaf people can do that for my Jesse.

There will always be a cultural gap between us and that is painful, but one needs to keep it in perspective. Jesse may not be what I had in mind at the baby shower, but neither are my other, now adult, children [laughter, applause], who have had the audacity to grow up exactly as they saw fit [laughter], despite my fond dreams at their cradles.

What is clear to me is that a sense of identity--that sense of wholeness which all human beings must have before the ordinary accomplishments of education become possible--is regularly assaulted in our deaf children's education, however unintentionally.

My son, at his IEP this year, said that he didn't want speech therapy, hearing aids, or phonic anythings, because he sounded funny when he spoke and didn't like himself that way. People stared and he didn't understand a word coming back. He preferred to write notes if there were no interpreters. The teachers at the IEP listened to this and suggested to Jesse how nice it would be if he could hear a plane. Jesse said that the likelihood of any airplane hitting him was very slim. [laughter, applause] But that is not the end of the story. [laughter continues] This is a serious story.

When we came home, Jesse signed to me--he fingerspelled--"I feel devasted." He meant "devastated." He said, he signed, "What I am isn't good enough for them." The entire next week Jesse signed all his school papers--so help me--"Jesse DEAF Thomas."

Jesse felt that his identity as a signing, deaf human being was not being respected, was in fact being undermined. I think Jesse felt this way because the value structure in this program, even though they sign, was very clear: Nothing is as good as hearing and speaking, even if you are, as Jesse is at 13, completely bilingual and read English at a 12th grade level. If the model and standards are still hearing standards, the system will still fail to produce self-respecting deaf human beings. The issue, therefore, is not just language and access through ASL, but also deaf culture, the root and source of deaf identity.

Which finally brings me to the model program here proposed. This program is itself exciting and wonderful; I really think so. I think it could benefit from more time, thought, and input. Here I will rapidly review a few issues, not so much in disagreement, but rather to amplify some key principles here articulated.

Considering the large number of hearing people involved in this model, the key issues of deaf identity and self-realization risk being skirted. I don't think the stigma of deafness can be uprooted unless the entire program is managed by deaf persons. Deaf education has excluded ASL because ASL has not got much that's hearing about it, and because ASL also binds together and reflects a minority culture. The use of ASL with deaf persons involved would probably result in some improvement in expectation and achievement, but fully educated, truly bilingual, bicultural deaf persons can best emerge from a system that has at its core autonomous, self-directing deaf persons who share a common culture and identity. This paper, by the way, did not disagree with this; I'm simply emphasizing it.

I am not suggesting, either, that deaf persons are more moral, more right, or more inspired than anyone else. That's silly. I am simply suggesting that the destiny of deaf persons, which surely is rooted in the educational system, needs to be determined by deaf persons. Nor am I suggesting . . . [applause for previous statement, once interpreted] . . . I always forget the interpreter lag. Nor [laughter] am I suggesting that hearing people should be excluded from everything in this model. Not at all. Just leadership. [laughter, applause] Hearing people can play a very useful role in technical assistance. [laughter] Now I'm very serious. And I would suggest an advisory board to give assistance in areas where deaf people have been unusually deprived.

Deaf people have the disadvantage of having been educated with bad models for good education. For example, in many deaf schools and programs, discipline is either totalitarian and arbitrary, or wildly permissive, because the teachers and students often don't understand each other. Also--and this is through no fault of their own and is a problem partly caused by terrible state certification requirements--teachers of the deaf are not required to know a lot about child development or how to create vital, exciting programs for academic achievement. As a result, deaf people who are educated in deaf programs have no models for creating really good and vital programs.

Teachers of the deaf, in every certification that I know of, are also not required to specialize in the academic subjects they teach, resulting often, for example, in certified teachers for the deaf having an obsession with English as their only qualification for teaching it.

It might be a good idea to look completely outside of deaf education, at some non-public schools, because public schools are themselves less than wonderful. I have experience with Quaker education and find the respect for academic excellence, the individual human spirit, and creative programming consistent with first-rate education. There's not a basal reader in sight. Quakers also understand that a key component to education is learning how to learn, how to think for one's self so one can learn for one's self and live for one's self.

But aside from searching and finding inspired views of educational programming, the program should be run by the deaf.

I am also nervous about professional counseling and early intervention. Early intervention programs are proliferating like crazy, and what they do appears to make things worse. My fantasy is to have a hearing parent and a deaf adult run early intervention centers, where only one skill is taught, and that is ASL. The rest is modeling normal human interaction. I don't know how much ASL parents will learn. They don't learn much signed English now, but they might learn to look at their kid as a kid and at deafness as another way of being human. I might add that the view that deaf persons would somehow come between hearing parents and their children, in my opinion, has no foundation. Deaf people made it possible for me to see that Jesse was first and foremost a child, just as I was first and foremost a parent, and that if we could communicate and if I allowed him to be deaf, we would just be an ordinary family. It was the positive example of deaf people that did most to help me overcome the negative view of deafness that leads to so much misguided intervention, exclusion of deaf people, and disempowerment of parents who don't feel capable of managing this "terrible affliction" in their lives. [applause] Deaf people helped me feel comfortable with my deaf child and enabled me to feel close to him.

I personally think that 16 students in a class won't wash. Nor do I think it's necessary for a hearing teacher always to be with the deaf one. Aside from possibly being intimidating, I don't think it's necessary. My deaf son accesses hearing culture by virtue of being a well-read, literate American who lives in America. A deaf teacher with 8 kids sounds good to me. [laughter, applause]

In addition, until we have learned how to teach English through ASL, there will always be bright, capable deaf students who must always learn through ASL. I remember distinctly a friend of Jesse's who described the digestive system to me in revolting detail [laughter], only to fail the test the next day because the test tested his English rather than his knowledge of our insides.

I have two more suggestions. I suggest that any teacher who spends more than five minutes a day on the calendar or teaches anything more than two times be fined half his salary. [laughter]

In conclusion, I wish to thank these scholars for their masterful presentation and for the better future for our children that it promises. I wish also to suggest that deaf persons themselves, identified as proud ethnics rather than as clients, be the managers of this experiment. They, after all, are the heart of the matter. Only deaf persons can fill our children's spirits, and they surely can't do worse than we've done in educational achievement.

Thanks.

[applause]

Questions from the Audience--Answers from the Panel

Moderated by Dr. Bruce White
Professor, Department of English, Gallaudet University

[Moderator] We now have about half an hour for questions and answers. I wish we had three hours, but we are limited. So if you want to start passing your questions on cards to the ends of the aisles, someone will go out and collect them. Or also, if you want, never mind writing and just come up in front and ask your questions in person--either way. I have to get out of the lights so I can see you.

[Woman in audience, signing] Congratulations for bringing this topic up. This discussion is long overdue. Thank you very much. Today I feel very excited because I was born into a deaf family. I'm third generation. I'm hard of hearing but I'm still deaf. I learned English and so forth and then I went to the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick. I graduated from that institution, so I know what it was like to grow up in a residential school before the 60s. I married, have a deaf husband, and have a son who is hearing; and that's fine. We communicate well at home. I should have come to Gallaudet years ago, but I was chicken. I was afraid. I never came here until I separated and thought, "Well, why not come to Gallaudet?" So I became a student here, graduated, then a few years later went to graduate school. I've been a temporary teacher here and a sign language teacher, training professionals and faculty at Gallaudet. I love my work. For the last three years I've been teaching English 50. That's a very basic English course here for students who are having difficulty acquiring English. I've felt that these students wasted their time going to mainstream programs and so forth, using signed English. They've lost out on so much. And now, using ASL, they comprehend. It's time for us to do something about this waste. It's a very serious issue. It's time to do some work. I know there are teachers here who support what I am saying. Recently I've been interpreting for a student who has a vision problem, so I see other difficulties in the classroom that need to be dealt with. It's time for some action. Too much time has been wasted already. It will take time for our ideas to succeed, but we must start the process now. Not tomorrow, please. Many thanks to the three of you.

[Moderator] Questions? Questions? Anybody?

[Woman in audience, speaking] I just have a question for the authors of this paper. There's a lot of talk about the home language. What do you consider the first language of a child who is deaf born into a home with hearing parents? Any of you can answer that question please.

[Moderator] Dr. Liddell?

[Dr. Liddell] Yes, it's our intention that the first language of a deaf child born into a hearing family would be ASL. I think we said that in the paper.

[Roberta Thomas] Didn't the question mean, what do you think *now* is the language in the home? Was that the question?

[Woman in audience, speaking] I guess my question was, how does ASL occur in the home, when the parents are hearing?

[Dr. Erting] Well, that's a different question from what I thought it was. Let me go back and answer the first question, the question I interpreted it to be, which is that for any deaf child our assumption, our position is that ASL, which is a natural language, a visual language, has to be the first language of a deaf child. It has to be a natural, visual language. And how that gets accomplished in a family where the parents are hearing and the rest of the family is hearing, by our proposal, is that . . . well, there's a daycare component to this proposal. We understand that hearing parents are not going to become proficient in ASL fast enough, if at all, to give the infant and the young child the kind of language input that that child has to have to acquire that language at the rate that we'd like them to, and at the proficiency level that we want. So the primary providers of that linguistic input have to be deaf adults in the daycare center. At the same time we have a very much more detailed component than we could outline here of family support and that has to do with teaching--let's not use that word at the beginning--with *helping* hearing parents understand the ways in which they *already* communicate with their infants, that really in the beginning have nothing to do with language, that have to do with interaction and social/emotional bonding and so on. They've got, in my experience anyway as a person who has worked with hearing parents both in an educational program and in research projects, hearing parents have a lot of strategies available visually and gesturally that we don't now capitalize on in our educational intervention schemes. So one thing is to show the parents what they already can do to communicate with their infant. And the other thing is to provide a tremendous amount of support for them and contact with the deaf community so that they begin to learn ASL. I think one of the things that we have to remember is that we've never really given hearing people, hearing parents, much of a chance to learn ASL. The assumption has been that they can't. And I think that we don't know that at all and that if the proper support and the proper environment were provided we could help them go a long way toward communicating with their child in the visual language that they need.

[Dr. Johnson] I just want to say one more thing, that some of the comments today and Carol's comment just triggered. One of the responses that we've been getting to this paper has been, "Well, look, we've had pretty bad luck getting hearing parents to learn SEE2, or other forms of signed English. And you can bet that it's going to be harder to get them to learn ASL. So really we should stay with signed English." The logic of which escapes me since we're arguing about which language it is better for the parents *not* to learn. I think that many parents have not had an opportunity to learn ASL partly because we haven't given it to them, as Carol has said, but partly also because education, particularly the individuals, the professionals that parents come in contact with during the early years of their child's life, mostly still think that there is something wrong if you have to "resort" to ASL. That the signed English system is the way it should be and if you have to learn ASL there's still something wrong with it. And there is still a widespread belief that the early learning of ASL will hurt the learning of speech skills. And I think this is communicated to parents by many of the professionals the parents come in contact with. So, it's not clear that parents could not learn ASL; I think it is clear that they've not been given a reason to.

[Moderator] Let me inject a question from one of you written here, that says, "The type of signing that proficient hearing signers use is PSE. Where does PSE fit into the picture?"

[Dr. Johnson] We didn't talk about that, and I wish we had. But when you write a paper you never think of everything. We showed it to lots of people and somehow that just didn't come up. I think realistically speaking we can't talk about truly fluent ASL use by a lot of hearing teachers. Many of us have been trying to learn ASL through various methods for a number of years and still find ourselves doing something that is not exactly ASL. What we do learn by studying ASL is how

to understand ASL. And how to sign in ways that, although they may not be grammatical, they are generally understandable. And, although they may not be beautiful, have the potential to communicate a lot of information in a short time, as does spoken English to hearing kids, as does ASL if you have a deaf teacher to deaf kids. I think that's the key. I think that the expectations of the system for the teachers is really the issue here. The teachers . . . the system of training teachers and the system of evaluating teachers does not value the learning of ASL. If you take Gallaudet as an example, teachers come here maybe knowing nothing about sign language. They are given 6 weeks of training in vocabulary and they are expected to teach high-level college topics with 6 weeks worth of vocabulary. And not only that, the courses that they take don't teach them to understand ASL, and not only that, after they pass the SimCom test, which many of you have had the pleasure of seeing, they are never essentially tested again. The SimCom test stays the same. So there is no approach to higher skill. If, on the other hand, we were to talk about the training of teachers in ASL, the training of our students at Gallaudet, the hearing students in the graduate programs, in ASL, it's true that even years after they began their training they would still have funny accents. They would still sign like hearing people sign. But they would be approaching some goal of excellence that had to do with ASL. And I hesitate to call that PSE . . . we could discuss that all day. But I think that's what you would expect hearing people to be using. And I think the secret is fluency, the ability to understand ASL and the ability to communicate things rapidly and well.

[Moderator] Jeff? Jeff recently was up with a question. Jeff, are you still here?

[Man in audience, signing] Yes. Okay, fine. My name is Jeff Rosen and I think this discussion is long overdue. I'm glad this proposal has been put on the table. Deaf people everywhere grow up with inadequate services--a problem that is addressed in this paper--so I'm really glad to see this kind of discussion being sponsored by the Gallaudet Research Institute. I just have a few remarks and questions for the authors. As I read your paper I was reminded of a number of related linguistic and cognitive studies I had read previously, and in some ways your paper strikes me as new clothing for an old idea. My hunch is that the success of your proposed model program will depend on two key factors: the way the project is conducted, of course, and the appropriateness of the role played by the three people now proposing it. In my opinion, the viable implementation of this project would have to involve--in addition to the authors--a number of deaf individuals, researchers, writers, and so forth. In fact, I think that the Research Institute, if it undertakes this project, has a responsibility to ensure that everyone who should be involved is included. I know that people who are doing research in the area of AIDS don't have to have AIDS themselves to study the problem, but I think it would be essential that all the appropriate people be included. I think that--for this proposal to work--the main thing would be that all of these people should share and advocate the same general concept. But at the same time, I think it would be important for the hearing people involved to remember that Gallaudet didn't have to speak for Clerc[18]. Clerc spoke quite well for himself. In other words, deaf people themselves will have to advocate this program for it to succeed. Now, the second point I would like to make is that I think there may be some weaknesses in the methodology of your study. Not looking into this in depth, I think the research you cite needs to be bolstered by the inclusion of some larger studies. In New York City, for instance, Asian people have fought the school system to get primarily Asian languages used in the schools. And the same has happened for Hispanic people. I think we need to base some of

[18]Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a hearing minister-turned-educator from Connecticut, went to Europe in 1815 to learn and bring back to the United States the best available method of educating deaf children. In 1816 he returned with Laurent Clerc, a deaf Frenchman, who helped Gallaudet establish the American School for the Deaf in Hartford. As was the case at the Institute for the Deaf in Paris, sign language was used as the mode of communication in the classroom.

our efforts on those models. We could also benefit from a longitudinal study of the deaf community. I don't think any such studies are currently underway.

[Moderator] Dr. Padden, I believe, has to leave to catch a 7 o'clock plane for California, so . . .

[Dr. Padden] I'm teaching tomorrow morning at 11:30, so I need to leave.

[Moderator] Anybody want to respond to comments/questions from Jeff?

[Dr. Johnson] In the paper, as Scott said in the beginning, this paper grew out of a request that we were making to a large, nearby, unnamed state for permission to set up a program like this in a school. And this paper was intended to be the argumentation for the proposal itself, the support for the proposal, and the backbone of the proposal. The proposal itself is a separate thing which we have not added to this paper because it's still in negotiation with the large, unnamed state. We're hoping that they go for it. We don't know it they will. But one of the features of our discussions from the very moment we started talking about this, from the moment we got the opening to go to visit the state board, was that the direction of the program in the school has to have deaf leadership. And while it's true that you don't have to have AIDS to study AIDS, and you don't have to be deaf to study deaf people, I think maybe it's the case that maybe you do have to be deaf to be the person who guides a program like this in its inception and probably later. I think that there are things about being deaf that no hearing person can ever understand, whether they live with deaf people, whether they have deaf children, and so on. That's just a part of experience that they can't understand. And I would like to see that experience built into the program. And that was part of our goal from the beginning. As far as the research, we view this as a research-driven idea, okay? I find it somewhat ironical that the criticism from the mainstream educators of our proposal is that we don't propose research. Where is the research on total communication? Where is it? It doesn't exist. The research is virtually impossible to find. Where is the research on SEE2? It's very sparse. What we wanted to do is build a program in which research would be the second major part of the component. And for that we were also proposing a deaf researcher. It would be longitudinal research. Our proposal would go over ten years and we would watch a program develop during that time. It would have to take into account linguistic research, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and so on. So, although the paper presents just the bones of a system, we have somewhat more complete ideas. Although all they are at this point is ideas. What we need is the chance to get together a team of people who really want to do this, a bunch of people who want to work as hard as it will take to recreate deaf education, and make it happen. And that's what we are hoping we get the chance to do.

[Dr. Erting] I just want to add one more thing. The part of the proposal that wasn't included here--the first year of the ten-year study is one full year of planning and during that time there would be an advisory board that would be gotten together with people with various types of expertise. We certainly don't believe that we're qualified, or even want to, develop this model program and flesh it out by ourselves. So, this is the structure, and then we would spend a year working with this advisory board and the two deaf people who would be chosen to be the director of the program and the research and evaluation person would be brought on board right away to work in that planning year.

[Man in audience[19], signing] I'd like to commend the three authors for putting these ideas down

[19]Dr. Harvey Goodstein, a professor in Gallaudet's Department of Mathematics (identified here because his remarks are cited in Dr. Gustason's next comment).

on paper and publishing them. I wouldn't go so far as to say that the paper provides the answers to all problems in deaf education, but I think this discussion is at least moving us in the right direction. There are several aspects of the paper, however, that do bother me somewhat. First of all, when we discuss bilingual education--teaching using both Spanish and English and so forth--we have to remember that when two *spoken* languages are involved, there are typically two modes of each language that are used: the written mode and verbal communication. But in deaf education, if we were to use ASL exclusively, there would be no reading and writing. That's not really an equivalent situation. So, I was a little concerned that it was being proposed that a model program would use ASL as the primary mode of communication for grades 1-12. I don't have any disagreement with the idea of starting early with ASL, to ensure that the development of concepts and cognitive thinking gets underway when it needs to, and so forth. But then, somewhere along the line, before the 12th grade, I think, we should shift toward using English as the primary mode of communication. But of course we would still use ASL much of the time anyway; there would in reality be a mixture of ASL and English. So I'm asking you: Do you really think we should use ASL as the primary mode of communication all the way through the 12th grade? And then, I'm equally concerned, what is ASL? That's my second point. People have different understandings of what ASL is. Ironically, I think that in SEE there is a lot more signing than fingerspelling, so users of SEE come up with signs for minute inflections and portions of English. They even have a sign for I-T, it, for example. So those are the two questions that I think we have to look at carefully in attempting to create this model program.

[Dr. Johnson] I keep looking at my two friends here and they point back at me, so I get to stand up and answer all the questions. You will notice that we do not call this "bilingual education." I think if we want to learn from the experience of bilingual education in this country, we can learn a few things. One is that it generally works. Better than English immersion does. Two is that the approach to bilingual education in this country is typically what they call subtractive bilingualism. The goal being to start where a child starts with two languages and loses one, namely Spanish, Cambodian, Vietnamese. Never English. And that isn't our goal here. Thirdly, in all other instances of bilingual education in the United States children are born with access to two languages. They can hear English and they can hear Spanish. Or they can hear English and they can hear Cambodian. Okay? That's not what we are talking about here. What we are talking about is children who are born and cannot hear English. Remember, they are deaf. So, our proposal is not bilingual education in the purest sense. It is education that would create people who are bilingual, not take advantage of the fact that they are bilingual and get rid of one language. So our goal is essentially monolingual education in ASL, particularly in the beginning. Now, you can argue up one side and down the other about when to introduce English. And I have to say, I don't know what the answer is because nobody's tried it. We know that deaf kids with deaf parents learn a lot of English in the home. And they learn it pretty early. So it's quite possible that you could start using English pretty early. But kids are not born ready to read. And since the primary objective or the primary vehicle for the learning of English in what we are proposing is literacy, that particular fact may need to be delayed. That is, we can't talk about both languages coming in right away. At least I think so. I'm willing to argue about it. I have to admit I don't know. The issue about how much English gets put in upper grades, one of the models of bilingual education is that you start with all Spanish and over the years Spanish goes down to nothing. And what replaces that is you start with no English and over the years English goes up to lots. So that by the time you are in 12th grade everything is English and nothing is Spanish. Well, again, we are stuck with the same problem and that is the view that SSS is English. It creates a difficulty. What would the English be? Our view is that English, in fact, will become increasingly important over the years, but that's because the learning from textbooks becomes increasingly important over the years in American education. Learning from books. And English is the language of our books. It never will be ASL.

So we see the importance of English as increasing, but still through literary means. And we have a great deal of difficulty accepting the notion that you can all at once start signing SEE and have it mean any more than the example we showed you. That's what SEE looks like. I'm sorry. I shouldn't say SEE. That's what SSS looks like. It doesn't matter what system you use. In our experience that's what it looks like. And it doesn't matter if you take a new teacher or if you take an old teacher, it looks that way. So I would caution you against using the word bilingual education. We're talking about ASL as a native language and that's the primary goal of what we're talking about.

[Moderator] We only have two or three minutes left. [To Dr. Gustason] Do you want to say something? Sure.

[Dr. Gustason] I have a few questions left related to that comment and what Harvey just said because, first, I'm not sure how you can say that children don't learn English through SEE when we have evidence and research to prove that they do. Secondly, I'm curious also how you define ASL because . . . would you label what Harvey was using ASL or more related to PSE? What about the study by Brasel and Quigley, who found that deaf children whose deaf parents signed PSE had better English skills than deaf children with deaf parents who signed ASL? I don't quite understand how you or we define ASL, and I don't understand what criteria you intend to impose on deaf people who work with deaf children. Would you forbid deaf people from using PSE? I'm very confused on that subject.

[Woman in audience, signing] I'm gratified that I have the opportunity to ask a question. I want to thank you all for raising this issue. I read through the paper and I thought it was fantastic, but I kept thinking something was missing. I thought of evaluation. Other school systems, I believe, both use and constantly evaluate speech and language and have specific criteria for formal evaluation of skill in these areas. There may not yet be an efficient way to evaluate ASL, but I strongly suggest or recommend that ASL evaluation be included or incorporated into the implementation of this project.

[Moderator] We need to stop now. If you want to stay and chat with some of these people, I'm sure that they would be willing. Do you have one final comment, Dr. Denton?

[Dr. Denton] Yes, just a final thought in listening to the discussion, questions, and comments. A suggestion to the people who developed the paper. First, I don't think you will really find resistance from educators of the deaf. I think the state of education of the deaf in America is educators are frightened. If we think of schools for the deaf, the old model, residential schools for the deaf in America are in deep trouble. Many of them are simply hanging on. They are totally immersed in problems of survival. I don't think educators of the deaf in general are going to resist the kind of model program you put forth. And I would welcome an opportunity to work with you and discuss this in detail. I do have a concern about the place of the family. And I think what we know about child development suggests to us that the most rapid, the most progressive, and most permanent change in the learning and development of a child comes when there has been a change in the understanding and behavior of the family. I strongly encourage you as you further develop this model program to find ways to include the family and consider what education has done down through the centuries, and that is to reach the mind, the intellect of the child through the people who rear him. And I think it is critical that we not do things that are going to diminish the value of parents in their own eyes, because parents of deaf kids, hearing parents, feel diminished enough as it is. And my final thought is that we together move forward from this landmark achievement in open discussion. This could not have happened 25 years ago. And I've been sitting just pinching

myself all afternoon to realize that we have come this far. But let's not kill the goose that laid the golden egg, or let's not forget how we came to where we are. And I plead, I make a plea for the kind of unity that's never before been quite as possible in deaf education as it is today. A real union, a permanent union between the minds and hearts of people who are deaf and those who hear and work with them. We all share the same community of thought and the same vision for the future and the same dreams. And now the opportunity to realize those is closer than it probably ever has been. I applaud you and I'm happy to work with you.

[Dr. Erting] I'd just like to second Dr. Denton's call for inclusion of the family in this whole procedure. I think that it's our belief that this type of program, instead of separating parent from child, will be the very thing that can bring hearing families with deaf children together. We're providing a tremendous amount of support to the hearing parents in the beginning. We've listed on page 20--we've got parent support groups, we have weekly deaf community contact with foster grandparents and the family, not just the child, family education and counseling, because hearing parents need to understand what their feelings are all about. They've got a tremendous mix of feelings when they discover they have a deaf child. This is all going to, in our view, bring the family and the child, the family and the educational establishment, and the family and the deaf community together in a way that's never been possible before.

[Dr. Karchmer] First, I'd like to close the proceedings by asking all of you to help me thank the participants for coming and sharing this information with us. [applause].

This should not be the final word on this topic. I hope that the discussions about this will continue throughout the term and beyond that. I hope that each of you in your own departments, in your own units, will further the discussions in the ways appropriate to what you do on a daily basis. This does not have to be your final word. I invite your written comments. I've already gotten a stack on my desk of very interesting things. Thank you very much.